



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention at

UN Group of Friends of Mediation
New York, 14/04/2022

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Dear Co-chairs,

A lot has changed since our last meeting on the second of February. One UN Member State has blatantly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another UN Member State. And trampled on the UN Charter. Russia must end its war now.

The unimaginable horrors inflicted on the civilian population of Ukraine underline once again that we need a strengthened approach to peace and security to face the alarming global increase in violent conflicts. A "New Agenda for Peace" as the SG calls it, where prevention and strengthened mediation capacities, including those of regional organisations, should play a vital role to the benefit of all parts of the globe.

Friends,

Six months ago, the world was united in celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Peace Agreement in Colombia. That agreement was lauded as a prime example of the possibility of resolving armed conflict through dialogue.

The world also needs mediation efforts to succeed in Myanmar, Sudan and other conflict zones. We would like to thank our co-chair Turkey for hosting direct talks between Ukraine and Russia.

We should be encouraged by the UN-brokered ceasefire on the first of April in Yemen, and the humanitarian truce in Ethiopia in March. In too many countries, notably in West-Africa and the Sahel, we need ongoing mediation efforts to succeed to accelerate a return from a coup d'état to a democratically elected government.

Dear friends,

As you know, Belgium had the honor to co-**chair the consultations on the third cluster** of Our Common Agenda, and discussed – among a range of other issues – ‘A new agenda for peace’.

We listened carefully to the interventions by the Membership and civil society. The summaries are still under review by the PGA’s office, but I think it was quite clear from the discussions in the room that many member states stressed that any ‘New Agenda for Peace’ must be underpinned by reinforcing human rights, international law and the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

Several member states asked for a strengthening of mediation capacities, stressed the important role of Mediation in conflict prevention and echoed the call of the UN75 Declaration for the SG to make full use of his diplomatic tool box, including his good offices. These are all the more important with global tensions on the rise which threaten a further paralyzing of the Security Council.

In order to give mediation a more prominent place in conflict prevention, BE would suggest to work along three lines:

- First raising “mediation awareness”. Now the Council is often too slow to react to be instrumental for preventive diplomacy.
- Second, sharing of “good practises”.
- Third, promoting principles and values. Mediation and peace processes with UN support should take place in a manner that promotes UN principles and values: respect of human rights, but also meaningful participation of women and youth. Inclusivity is key for building and sustaining peace, so efforts must be made to widen the space and have civil society and grassroots movements contribute to the peace process. Only then can mediation lead to a sustainable social contract and to peace.

As the OCA-report states: our challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed by an equally interconnected, inclusive response.

I listened carefully to our discussion today in our Group of Friends.

We are in dialogue with the Office of the PGA on the Peace & Security cluster of Our Common Agenda, and we are happy to forward our common message.

I thank you.