Programme

Launch of the joint DPPA-OHCHR practice note on “Enhancing the Quality and Effectiveness of Mediation Efforts through Human Rights”

Tuesday, 7 November 2023 from 2:15 to 3:15 pm

Hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
335 East 45th Street, New York, New York, 10017

Background

A central purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. It engages in conflict prevention, mediation, and good offices to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes. In these efforts, the UN emphasizes respect for human rights as a fundamental principle. The UN Charter in its preamble commits to "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights."

In this context, the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have developed a practice note on Enhancing the Quality and Effectiveness of Mediation Efforts through Human Rights. This practice note explores how human rights can support UN mediation, good offices and preventive diplomacy efforts. It provides practical strategies and real-world examples of how mediators can use human rights to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their work, including through opening space for political negotiations, strengthening ongoing peace processes and reinvigorating stalled efforts.

The practice note responds directly to the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights and is launched at a moment when OHCHR and DPPA are respectively commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of Special Political Missions.

Programme

I. Welcome
- H.E. Mr. Joonkook Hwang, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

II. Introduction
- Facilitator: Mr. Asif Khan, Director of the DPPA Policy and Mediation Division

III. Opening remarks
- Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
- Mr. Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
IV. Reflections from mediation and human rights practitioners
   • Mr. Diego García-Sayán, former President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Foreign Minister and Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Peru
   • Ms. Leila Zerrougui, former judge of the Supreme Court of Algeria, SRSG and Head of MONUSCO, and SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict

V. Contributions from the audience

VI. Closing remarks
   • Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

Guiding questions

   • Reflecting on your own experience, how have you seen human rights principles and practices contribute to more effective mediation? Did the strategies set out in the Practice Note resonate with you?
   • How can we address challenges or concerns related to bringing human rights principles and considerations into mediation efforts?
   • What role can the United Nations and Member States play in improving linkages between mediators and human rights practitioners in peace negotiations?

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