



## **AGENDA**

### **Mediators' Retreat 2005**

#### **Conflict Mediation – Diverse approaches, common dilemmas**

This is the third Mediators' Retreat, and this year's event aims to build on the success of the last two by continuing the exchange of views and experience between senior conflict mediators from a range of institutional backgrounds. Our objective is to create a space where mediators can discuss openly the dilemmas they face, and learn from each other's experience how such dilemmas might be overcome. We hope through this practical exchange and interaction to promote a stronger shared sense of common purpose among mediators, and facilitate the emergence of an informal network that can be called on for support and advice.

Background papers have been provided, but to stimulate thinking not necessarily guide discussion. A report of the meeting will be prepared, but as an *aide-memoire* not a set of conclusions.

#### **Monday 27th June**

##### **13:00 Lunch**

##### **15:00 Session One – Conflict mediation today: problems and prospects**

Current efforts to find peaceful and negotiated solutions to armed conflicts take place against the backdrop of perhaps contradictory international trends. There is greater international engagement in efforts to end civil wars, and the proposal to create a UN Peacebuilding Commission is an important development. At the same time, military spending in 2004 reached its highest level since the end of the Cold War, and the threat of inter-State wars persists. The “war on terror” has given greater legitimacy to the resort to force in many contexts, and made engagement with armed groups more problematic, even though in some cases it has been a factor in pushing such groups towards negotiations.

*What are the main international developments affecting conflict mediation today? What can be done to increase support for negotiated solutions to conflict?*

**17:00 Close of session**

**19:00 Reception and dinner**

There will be a short reception, followed by dinner hosted by State Secretary and Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen and Martin Griffiths.

**Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> June**

**09:00 Session Two – Mediators and the Media**

Mediators, politicians and the press are locked into an intense but often dysfunctional relationship. Reliant upon each other to achieve vital but sometimes incompatible objectives, their methods, style and goals frequently clash. Each may seek to manipulate the other, with greater or lesser degrees of success. The press may well have the power to make or break a mediation process. A background paper provides a starting point for the discussion.

*How can mediators manage the power the media represents? What approaches and strategies can be used to ensure, as far as possible, media coverage supports, or at least does not undermine, the peace process?*

**10:30 Coffee Break**

**11:00 Session Three – Real conflicts, real dilemmas**

Presenters will provide a fifteen minute case study of one or more conflict on which they have worked, focussing on the following questions:

*What obstacles have they faced in bringing armed groups into the process and how have these been overcome? What have been the most intractable problems of the process under discussion, and what approaches have been used, or might be used, to solve them? How and in what ways does the international context impact on the process? From the mediator's perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of his approach, including his institutional setting?*

**13:00 Lunch**

**15.00 Session Four – Human rights diplomacy in peace making**

Discussions on human rights and conflict resolution tend to focus on the question of accountability for war crimes. Human rights principles and mechanisms are much broader, however, and provide tools and methods that mediators might use, even as inducements, in both the mediation and implementation phases. The greater international attention to human rights, including in the UN Secretary-General's reform report ("In Larger Freedom") suggests a need to look carefully at the better integration of these

issues into peace-making, and going beyond the question of accountability. A background paper provides a starting point for the discussion.

*How can mediators use human rights principles and mechanisms to support the peace process? What positive examples are there in this regard, and how might these be built on? Is there a greater role for a focus on the often neglected economic, social and cultural rights? What are the risks of a greater integration of human rights principles in peace-making and how might these be mitigated?*

**16.30 Coffee Break**

**17.00 Session Five – Summing-up and ideas for further interaction and reflection**

**17.30 Close of meeting**