

Advancing Women in High Level Mediation: Addressing Mediator Qualifications
26th June 2018
Maison de la Paix, Geneva

Since the adoption in 2000 of the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325, in which the Security Council recognised for the first time the need to include women in its peace and security work, a significant body of research has emerged, analysing the importance of women's participation in peace negotiations. One relatively under-addressed aspect of the WPS agenda has been the advancement of women in the role of mediator. This is despite clear policy commitments throughout WPS resolutions adopted by the Security Council that call for greater representation of women within high-level UN mediation teams. Research published in 2012 showed that between 1991 and 2011, of 31 mediation processes only three were led by women as the chief mediator. Slightly more women have held senior positions in which they have fulfilled mediation roles, for example as a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), but even when women in senior roles with a mediation function are included, the numbers of women achieving high-level discretionary appointments remain extremely low.

The relative absence of women in high level mediation can be partly attributed to the fact that such discretionary appointments are made on the basis of **political nominations** by states. Appointees are nominated on the basis of diplomatic prestige rather than because of mediation skills or experience. There is a lack of transparency in the criteria that are applied to this selection process, which has heavily favoured the appointment of senior male figures. The adoption of **skills based selection criteria** for mediators and high-level mediation advisors would address the currently opaque nature of the appointments process. In addition, it would help to clarify the experiences best suited to equip mediators to design more inclusive processes, which is consistently identified as one of the key challenges, and opportunities, for sustainable peace.

Recent years have seen the establishment of a number of new **Networks** of women mediators. One of the proposed aims of such networks is to identify and support women who would be suitable for nomination to mediation positions. However to be successful, greater clarity is needed in the criteria to be applied when identifying, recruiting and nominating women for high level positions. Networks are also seeking to support members by identifying the right training and development and field deployments for career advancement. The Networks therefore have a potentially central role in promoting a skills-based approach to recruitment and progression, helping to redress the gendered nature of perceived mediator characteristics.

The aim of this workshop is to bring together cross-regional mediation experts and practitioners involved in process design and facilitation, training, selection and recruitment of mediators, as well as government officials involved in the nomination of mediators for track 1 processes, to discuss essential the skills and experience required to mediate processes to prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflict. Participants are invited to contribute to the conversation under **Chatham House rules** and in their personal capacity.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

1. Identify a set of skills based qualifications for recruitment of high-level mediators; and
2. Identify steps that networks and states can make to ensure that more women are successfully nominated for mediation positions.

The workshop will be followed by a **reception** with high-level diplomatic representatives to highlight the current imbalance in mediator selection, the difficulties in the nomination process, and the outcomes of the workshop. It will also provide an opportunity for government representatives, mediators and experts working in the field to build stronger connections and mutual understanding.