

Statement by

**H.E. Ambassador Brian Flynn
Deputy Permanent Representative**

at the

Security Council Chamber

**Open Debate on Mediation and
Settlements of Disputes**

New York, 29 August 2018

Thank you Mr President.

And thank you for convening today's important debate.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary General, the Most Reverend Welby, and Ms Qadeem for their insightful briefings.

Ireland also aligns itself with the statements delivered by the European Union and by the Group of Friends of Mediation.

Mr President,

While we have collectively taken important steps to strengthen our capacity since the last debate on mediation in 2009, the changing global context in which we now operate makes mediation an ever more important tool.

Ireland has been a consistent advocate for the role mediation can play throughout the conflict cycle, from conflict prevention to long term reconciliation. We welcome the strong focus the Secretary General has placed on the importance of mediation, something that this Council has also acknowledged.

With this in mind, today we will share some brief reflections and suggestions based on our own experiences in Ireland. As others have said, inclusivity is a key element to successful mediation.

However, despite clear evidence that including women in negotiations can contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive peace agreement, between 1990 and 2017, women made up just 2% of mediators in major peace processes.

If we are to be more effective in our use of mediation, this simply must change.

In June 2018, Ireland hosted a 'Promoting Women in Peace' Mediation Seminar, followed by a roundtable discussion with international Women Mediators Networks. Key points of discussion included:

- The importance of gender mainstreaming and continued dialogue in peacebuilding;
- The need to better recognise and resource women mediators;
- The need to meaningfully connect grassroots-level mediation with national high level processes; and
- The benefits of women mediators' networks, as systems of support that can help women to find an entry point into negotiations.

We would also like to highlight the growing importance of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. Youth can play a positive role in mediation and their voices need to be heard. Ireland provided financial support to the recently published Progress Study on youth, peace and security and looks forward to implementation of its recommendations.

Mr President,

If we want to improve our capacity in mediation we must properly resource conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes. Ireland has invested \$19.26 million in the Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund since 2006.

Ireland has also contributed €2.2 million in extra-budgetary support to UNDP's Mediation Support Unit since its inception in 2008.

As a founding member and core donor to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, meanwhile, Ireland has seen the impact mediation can make on the ground through empowering and resourcing women civil society actors.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the result of a long process of negotiation, peacebuilding and - as Lord Ahmad said earlier - mediation in Northern Ireland.

In this context, it is appropriate to recognise the critical work of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition in those negotiations. The Coalition was particularly crucial in drafting language on reconciliation and integrated schooling.

In April 2018, when addressing the General Assembly during the High-Level meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins stated that:

'... peace in Ireland could not have been achieved without the steady and courageous activism of civic organisations campaigning for a more just and peaceful society, many of which were led by the women of Ireland, North and South'.

Mr President,

This Council has a particular responsibility to support the Secretary General, and the wider organisation, including the PBC, to enhance the use of effective mediation to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

We strongly support the Secretary General's call for a 'quantum leap' in the financing of peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities, and we urge the Council to support activities aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict.

Thank you.