

Intervention for the H.E. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 10th Ministerial Meeting of Group of Friends of Mediation with the theme "New Technologies for Peace and Mediation as tools for inclusion"

09:00-10:30am, 26 September 2019

**Mr. Co-Chairmen,
Hon'ble Ministers,
Excellencies,**

I must commend the role of our two co-chairs of the Group- Turkey and Finland and their leadership for spearheading all these activities for the last decade. I take the opportunity to thank both my colleagues, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Finland for this. Exchange of views and consolidating our efforts can go a long way to strengthen the preventive diplomacy agenda of the Secretary-General.

The Charter of the United Nations identifies mediation as an important means for peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts. In 2012, Bangladesh joined the UN Member States in co-sponsoring the General Assembly resolution 65/283 entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution". The resolution adopted by consensus was important in providing a comprehensive normative framework of mediation. Since its establishment in 2010, the Group of Friends of Mediation has played a significant role towards increasing the visibility of mediation and keeping the agenda at the General Assembly and other forum.

We have seen the effectiveness of mediation tool in preventing, managing and resolving both inter-State and intra-State disputes and averting conflicts. Mediation in bilateral, regional and international disputes needs to be supported and sustained. Instead of heavily spending on military and defence capabilities, the role of diplomacy through timely and effective mediation needs to be strengthened further through capacity building, technical assistance and financial resourcing.

Bangladesh is a staunch supporter of resolution of conflicts through peaceful, negotiated and non-military means. Our foreign policy is driven by the motto "Friendship to all and malice towards none", coined by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which resonates well in our present-day political dynamics in the comity of nations. Our commitment to and experience of peacekeeping and peacebuilding has been well acclaimed over the 30 years of our association with the UN peacekeeping. We have shown the pathway to amicable

settlement of bilateral issues through leadership, negotiation and diplomacy. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has led it from the front. Bangladesh also supports and advocates for the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We have been honoured to chair the Commonwealth Ministerial meeting in 2018 and also this year to continue Bangladesh's leadership role in mediation efforts in resolving conflict between friendly countries.

It would not be out of context to recall, it was due to Bangladesh delegation's insistence that 'Culture of Peace' became a separate agenda item of the plenary of UNGA. Under this agenda items in recent years we have seen a surge of new resolutions urging Member States for building trust and confidence by encouraging dialogue, mediation and moderation for living together in peace and harmony. On 13 September 2019, the UN observed the 20th anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace with a high-level forum. It called for a renewed approach to both peace and development, to bring more coherence and integration between the three founding pillars of the United Nations.

As we inch towards the 75th anniversary of the UN, our conviction is only getting stronger that multilateralism needs to be at the forefront of maintaining international peace and security. Member States should support UN-mediated efforts in various conflict situations. The various cooperation mechanisms between the UN and regional organizations should be further enhanced and synergized.

During or before the mediation process new technologies especially online platform can be used to incorporate views of broader audience. This will surely help the process to become inclusive.

I would like to assure you of Bangladesh's full support in every effort of the group's initiative.

I thank you all.