

Quarterly Progress Update on the Multi-Year Appeal

Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

1 July to 30 September 2017



United Nations
Department of Political Affairs

DIPLOMACY. PREVENTION. ACTION



Prevention: Setting the Agenda

The **Department of Political Affairs** (DPA) continued to support the United Nations' engagement in **Myanmar** following the developments set off by events on 25 August 2017, including the displacement of nearly half a million people from Rakhine state to Bangladesh. Extra-budgetary (XB) funding allowed DPA, as the office providing the main support to the Secretary-General's good offices, to continue undertaking in-depth analysis of the political complexities and evolving situation in Myanmar. This in turn, helped guide the decision-making processes of the UN's senior management, and prepare one briefing from the Secretary-General and three briefings from DPA to the Security Council over the course of five weeks. The Secretary-General and DPA continue to engage with Member States, regional organisations, including ASEAN, and other partners, to find a durable solution to this crisis.

Thanks to XB funding, DPA deployed a Liaison Officer to Bougainville to work closely with the Peace and Development Advisor in bolstering DPA's support to the Government of **Papua New Guinea** and the Autonomous Government of Bougainville as they implement the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement ahead of the referendum planned for 2019. In addition, at the request of the Papua New Guinea Government, DPA deployed an expert in September to

provide technical expertise on the implementation of the Bougainville Weapons Disposal Strategy. The expert continues to work with relevant authorities, as well as local communities on a weapons disposal survey to help guide the scope and timeline of the implementation plan.

During the reporting period, DPA also organised a workshop for young political leaders in Khartoum, **Sudan** from 20-24 August to strengthen their capacity to address root causes of conflicts and contribute meaningfully to building durable peace. Over 40 young people, including 17 women, representing 35 political parties – the opposition included – participated. The event was held in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator in Sudan, and the Sudanese Political Parties Affairs Council. Participants were presented with a range of best practices and lessons learned from other countries on nation-building. The training dealt with issues of power and wealth-sharing, constitution-building and conflict resolution, among others. The feedback from both government and opposition was overwhelmingly positive. The training helped to overcome polarized political positions amongst the participants, and promote a culture of dialogue among political parties on critical issues for Sudan's future.



Crisis Response and Resolution

In July, the United Nations Special Envoy for **Syria**, Staffan de Mistura, held the seventh round of Geneva talks based on Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva Communiqué. The talks proceeded by combining both the formal and technical consultative mechanism. The latter was established by the Special Envoy's office in May for experts from the negotiating delegations to examine technical issues and identify commonalities. The Office of the Special Envoy continued to host the International Syria Support Group's task forces on ceasefire and humanitarian access, and facilitated the participation of Syrian women and civil society through the

Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room. Separate from the UN-facilitated processes, the Office of the Special Envoy continued to provide technical expertise to the Astana talks convened by the guarantor countries, Iran, Turkey and Russia. XB resources have been vital for expanding the rounds of negotiations, supporting their direct costs and covering, for example, the costs to provide expertise. Similarly, XB funds have been critical to sustain the second phase of the UN post-agreement planning process to improve the UN's preparedness should the parties reach a political agreement. Funding has been used to support the Syria Inter-Agency

Task Force and its Working Group to address ongoing operational issues including on local governance, civil documentation and housing/land/property – areas identified as priorities by the Syrians.

The **Rapid Response System** continued to be an indispensable tool to ensure that the Department can respond quickly and effectively to fast and changing contexts. From January to September, the Department approved more than \$2 million in Rapid Response requests. For example, Rapid Response funding allowed DPA to act upon several of the recommendations arising from Assistant Secretary-General Jenča's visit to Bangladesh and his discussions with national stakeholders on the prevention of violent extremism, the Rohingya and the border situation with Myanmar. Following the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan, DPA deployed an independent analyst in September to assess the political economy in the border region. Working in close coordination with the Peace and Development Advisors in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and the UN Country Teams, the consultant will devise a series of recommendations on border related issues for the

UN system to strengthen its support to the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Another key resource in DPA's toolbox, is the **Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers**, a group of full-time mediation experts that can be rapidly deployed to provide technical advice to United Nations officials and other actors leading mediation and conflict prevention efforts. In the third quarter, the Standby Team provided in-person support and remote advice on more than thirty occasions (110 occasions since the start of 2017) in relation to the Central African Republic, Central Asia, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. In Sudan, for example, a Senior Mediation Adviser continued to support the peace engagements efforts led by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel and the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Nicolas Haysom. The Senior Mediation Adviser supported the discussions with Sudanese interlocutors as part of the larger peace process. This support contributed to reaching a better understanding of positions of parties to conflict. This included matters related to cessation of hostilities and humanitarian assistance with respect to the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan Areas.



Investing in sustaining peace

In **Colombia**, XB funding provided invaluable support for the successful completion of the laying down of arms by the FARC-EP. The United Nations Mission in Colombia benefited from technical expertise on the laying down and disposal of weapons, including regarding the delicate task of verifying the destruction of 750 arms caches. XB funding also provided support for the transport and disposal of collected weapons in zones and points. The completion of the laying down of weapons represented a historic milestone in the peace process, marking the end of the armed conflict and the beginning of the reintegration of former combatants, which will also be verified by the United Nations. In this regard, XB funding also strengthened DPA's planning capacity to support the transition from the United Nations Mission in Colombia, which concluded its twelve-month mandate on 25 September, to the

newly established Verification Mission. The second Mission has begun verifying the reintegration of the FARC-EP and of security guarantees for the group and for conflict-affected communities. The continued involvement of the United Nations in this crucial phase of implementation will contribute to the consolidation of peace in Colombia.

In the **Sahel region**, XB funds have been critical to the implementation of a capacity development programme for the Ministerial Coordination Platform for Sahel strategies, and more specifically to support the Chadian vision for the presidency of the platform, which has been extended for a third year (2018). The Ministerial Coordination Platform is the highest-level political-diplomatic instrument to discuss cross-cutting challenges affecting the Sahel and to promote collaboration and synergies between Sahel countries

and their partners. The United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWAS) deployed two consultants to provide technical support to the Chadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Plan of Action. This support helped coordinate the thematic working groups of the UN Integrated Strategy for Sahel. It enhanced common analysis, and coordinated action in the region.

Finally, by the end of the third quarter, DPA, as the lead UN Department for **electoral assistance**, received 14 new requests for electoral support

from Member States. XB funding continued to be instrumental in the deployment of needs assessment missions (NAMs) to respond to requests from Member States, including Bangladesh, Libya, Mexico and Nauru. For instance, a NAM was deployed to Bangladesh in July to respond to a request from the Election Commission for assistance in the run up of the 2018/2019 general elections. In August, DPA deployed a NAM to Libya to support the Libyan High National Electoral Commission for the coordination of international electoral support.



Women, Peace and Security

DPA, with Finland's support and its implementing partner Crisis Management Initiative, conducted the eighth High-Level Seminar on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes in Helsinki for 25 envoys, senior mediators and mediation experts from the UN, Member States, regional organizations and civil society. Since its inception in 2013, a total of 210 participants have participated in the seminar series. The overall objective of the High-level Seminar is to generate more inclusive peace processes by promoting women's effective participation and building inclusive, gender-sensitive mediation capacity at international, regional and national levels. The seminar offers practical "how-to" strategies and tools for more inclusive mediation process design, as well as options for gender-relevant provisions for the key thematic areas of peace agreements.

In addition, during the third quarter of 2017, the Gender and Inclusive Mediation Guidance was translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish and Russian and is now available in all UN languages on

the UN Peacemaker website. The guidance seeks to inform mediators, their teams, and conflict parties, about the principles and strategies for the effective inclusion of women, as well as a gendered perspective in mediation processes. The guidance addresses mediation preparation, process design, and substantive issues including security arrangements. These include addressing sexual violence in conflict, power sharing and women's political participation, constitutions, language and the implementation of peace agreements through a gendered lens. The guidance was also launched in Addis Ababa during the inaugural meeting of the African Union's Steering Committee of women mediators, with remarks from Dr. Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, member of the AU Panel of the Wise and FemWise Co-Chair, as well as Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, former interim President of the Central African Republic. Speakers underscored the importance of inclusivity calling for a stronger commitment to gender parity and the effective participation of women in peace processes.



Expanding partnerships with Member States and regional organizations

Thanks to XB funding, the **United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa** (UNOCA) organized a sub-regional workshop on cooperation between the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and women in the media. The workshop took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 29 to 31 August 2017, and was jointly organized with ECCAS and *Femmes éditrices pour la paix et la sécurité en Afrique centrale*, an association of women editors. Some 25 participants from Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Rwanda attended the workshop, which helped strengthen the active participation of women in the media in support of peace processes in Central Africa. An important outcome from the workshop was the creation of a “Regional Network of Media Women for Peace and Security in Central Africa” that will contribute to greater mobilization of women across the region and will serve as a platform to collaborate with other entities to bring visibility to women, peace and security in Central Africa.

XB funding continued to play a central role in DPA’s efforts to strengthen regional and sub-regional mediation capacity. For example, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) presented their new Guidelines on Mediation in Abuja. These guidelines, based in part on the United Nations’ Guidance on Effective Mediation, will contribute to further building ECOWAS’ mediation engagements. In addition, DPA’s Mediation Support

Unit, in partnership with UNOCA, UNOWAS and ECOWAS, supported the ECCAS efforts to establish its institutional mediation support capacity. A workshop was held in Abuja during the month of September in which ECOWAS shared experiences and lessons learnt on establishing their own mediation and facilitation unit. This exchange helped inform ECCAS’ analysis of the strategic challenges and opportunities it faces as it seeks to increase its mediation engagements in Central Africa. In addition, with XB funds, DPA helped facilitate a high-level meeting between the United Nations and the Indian Ocean Commission to develop a framework for increased cooperation on preventive diplomacy and mediation, among other areas of common concern. The framework sets the foundation for an increased partnership between the two organisations in the field of peace and security.

Finally, XB funding has helped DPA organize several electoral capacity development initiatives and trainings for regional organizations. For example, DPA deployed electoral experts to assist the electoral unit of the League of Arab States and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to establish and upgrade their electoral database and institutional memory. Finally, in September, XB funds supported the organization of a staff exchange programme with SADC Secretariat Officials that provided them the opportunity to engage with various UN entities who are involved in electoral activities at the UN Headquarters.



Strengthening UN system-wide collaboration and beyond

The XB supported **UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security in Vienna**, together with the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN Global Service Centre co-organised an expert-level meeting on mission start-up from 18 to 19 July in Vienna. The different parts of the OSCE Secretariat - including its Conflict Prevention Centre - dealing with mission management and deployment were represented in the meeting. Drawing from the UN's experience and expertise shared by the UN Global Service staff who participated in the exercise, the meeting helped strengthen the OSCE's internal capacity to manage ongoing field missions and to potentially deploy new ones. The UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security in Vienna continues to ensure effective coordination between the UN and the OSCE.

Throughout the third quarter of 2017, DPA has continued to support the **International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala** (CICIG). Established in 2007 following an agreement between the United

Nations and the Government of Guatemala, CICIG is a ground-breaking institution that aims to strengthen the rule of law and justice sector institutions in Guatemala. Working with national prosecutors, CICIG has helped tackle highly-entrenched corruption networks. DPA closely liaises with CICIG and Member States in support of that institution's mandate. Thanks to XB funding, DPA and the Permanent Mission of Guatemala organised a donor meeting at UN headquarters. The CICIG Commissioner briefed Member States on progress made in the implementation of its mandate. The Guatemalan Foreign Minister, the President of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and the Minister of Interior highlighted CICIG's key role in institutional strengthening. Following a number of high-profile cases investigated by the Attorney General's Office and CICIG, some sectors have expressed concern regarding the reach of CICIG's action. At the request of the Guatemalan Government, DPA will engage in a structured dialogue process with the Government with a view to addressing concerns regarding the implementation of CICIG's mandate.



Ensuring organizational effectiveness

Since assuming office in January 2017, the Secretary-General has emphasised his vision for a modern and operational peace and security architecture. This requires effective information sharing platforms and what the Secretary-General has defined as "a digital first approach" to optimise the use of technological progress. In this context, with XB funding, DPA's Security Council Affairs Division launched an innovative project to optimise the way in which data reflecting the work of the Security Council is captured and presented. The new web-based application has been designed using open-source technologies to improve access to and analysis of the work of the Security Council. Equipped with a tailored query engine, the application also enables

data visualisation and improved reporting, and is fully compliant with the Organization's information and communication technology and security standards. The application is already capable of analysing Security Council decisions (i.e. resolutions and presidential statements) as well as the Council's meeting records.

XB funding allowed DPA to provide strategic planning support to the ongoing transition in Liberia where the current peacekeeping mission (UNMIL) will withdraw in March 2018. It also facilitated the provision of technical support and expertise on planning issues to the strategic review of the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Cyprus.

During the reporting period, DPA commissioned an internal mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2016-2019 that completed visits to Bangkok, Baghdad, Brussels, Dakar, Jakarta, and Vienna, and held detailed consultations within DPA. The review seeks to further articulate DPA's Theory of Change, inform future strategic planning and the development of the 2018-2019 Results Framework accompanying the Strategic Plan.

Using XB funds, and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and UNOWAS, DPA organized a seminar on "Lessons learned from the 2015-2016 elections cycle in West Africa" from 25 to 26 July 2017 in Guinea, Conakry. The seminar brought together around 50 participants including representatives from 16 electoral management bodies from the region, diverse civil society representatives, as well as regional and international

organizations. The seminar covered a wide range of issues from boundary delimitation, voter registration and women's participation in electoral processes to prevention of electoral violence and provided a venue for participants to share experiences and lessons learned on electoral matters between the Member States in West Africa and the Sahel Region who had either held presidential elections during 2015 and 2016, or would be holding elections in the near future.

Finally, XB funding allowed DPA to continue implementing the priorities identified in the 2017 DPA training strategy. For example, DPA strengthened the drafting skills of 20 field staff through a training course on drafting for political analysis in Dakar, Senegal. The course covered general principles of good writing and best practices of political analysis.

Financial snapshot

From 1 January to 30 September, the Department received contributions from 21 donors amounting to \$13.6 million. In addition, the Department has \$7.3 million in the pipeline thanks to annual and multi-year

agreements. This leaves a current funding gap of \$6 million to meet the \$27 million funding target outlined in the 2017 Update to the Multi-Year Appeal available at: <http://www.un.org/undpa/en/funding>



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For further information contact Mr. Sushil Raj,
Senior Officer for Donor Relations (raj3@un.org)

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