

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

ESSAYS:

A. Several influential media have been criticising the United Nations for being ineffective in addressing crucial issues of importance to the international community, such as terrorism, human rights, democracy, peacekeeping and UN reform, including financial control and management. As a result, the image of the United Nations has suffered. You have been tasked to formulate a public information strategy in order to counter the criticisms in one of the areas above and to help improve the image of the Organisation. Explain your strategy and how your strategy can be implemented.

B. The Security Council held a high-level meeting on “Mediation and Settlement of Disputes”. The United Nations News Centre, an on-line news service, wants to highlight the debate on its news website. Using the press release issued on the debate (see Annex), draft an appropriate news article for the website. Start with a heading.

C. The Secretary-General wants to publish an op-ed article on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in an international newspaper. MDGs are listed below. 2009 marks the first year after the half point was reached between the agreement on the MDGs and the planned date for the accomplishments of the MDGs. Draft an op-ed article under the name of the Secretary-General on the state of affairs on this important milestone. Take into account the fact that an op-ed article is relatively short and, should be well structured and convey key messages. Discuss where we stand now and what remains to be accomplished. You may decide to address future challenges as a whole or focus on no more than 4 goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights-the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

QUESTIONS:

1. 2009 is the international year of biodiversity. The UN would like to set up a website to promote the year and you have been asked to design it. Briefly present with bullet points the design; decide on 3 key messages and your strategy to promote them.
2. You have been assigned to produce a three-minute news video for United Nations Television, which will be aired on an international satellite television station. The topic is “violence against women”. Describe your video production proposal. What elements would you choose for the proposal?
3. United Nations Radio is preparing a 5-minute feature story on climate change and the role of the United Nations in it. How would you go about preparing the story? Describe the essential steps you would take and how you would structure the radio presentation.
4. A civil society group active in genocide prevention wants to organize an exhibition at United Nations Headquarters or at a United Nations office in the field. List three (3) criteria that the United Nations should consider in order to approve the proposal.
5. The next soccer World Cup will be held in South Africa in 2010. The Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace wants to use this event as a platform to highlight the role of sports for African development. What activities would you recommend to the Special Adviser? List three (3) and explain how these activities can be most effectively carried out.
6. You have been tasked to prepare events for the International Day of Non-Violence. What events would you undertake? Describe your activities in three (3) key media.
7. A new peacekeeping mission is being established in a buffer zone between two countries with poor communications and transport infrastructure. The mission’s mandate is to monitor a ceasefire in the buffer zone, to undertake de-mining and to provide social services to the war-affected population. Your task is to set up a public information unit for the new mission. Briefly describe:
 - a. The structure of the Public Information Unit;
 - b. Three (3) key activities it should undertake;
 - c. Target audience(s);
 - d. How to reach this/these audience(s)?

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

8. The United Nations is working with Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassadors in order to promote United Nations values, standards and issues.

Current UN Messengers of Peace are:

- Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein
- Daniel Barenboim
- George Clooney
- Paulo Coelho
- Midori Goto
- Michael Douglas
- Jane Goodall
- Yo-Yo Ma
- Charlize Theron
- Elie Wiesel

Select three (3) current or former Goodwill Ambassadors or Messengers of Peace and briefly discuss what issue(s) they are or were promoting and how?

ANNEX:

23 September 2008



Security Council

SC/9452

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Security Council
5979th Meeting (PM)

SECRETARY-GENERAL, FORMER TOP SPECIAL ADVISER JOIN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING AS SECURITY

COUNCIL STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF MEDIATION IN PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Joined by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former Special Adviser Lakdhar Brahimi in the Security Council this afternoon, Heads of State and Government and other senior national officials stressed the importance of mediation for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in a high-level meeting occasioned by the start of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

In a presidential statement read out by Foreign Minister Bedouma Alain Yoda of Burkina Faso, which holds the rotating Council presidency for September, the 15-member body affirmed the crucial role of the United Nations, particularly that of the Security Council, in mediation efforts.

It emphasized the importance of envoys and other representatives of the Secretary-General, requesting him to continue to ensure that all mediation processes under the aegis of the Organization were consistent with its principles, as well as impartial and competently conducted.

Encouraging the Secretary-General to consider how United Nations mediation capabilities could be strengthened, Council members stressed the importance of regional and subregional organizations, the participation of women, peacebuilding activities and ownership of mediation processes by the parties concerned. They requested a report from the Secretary-General in six months on United Nations mediation and possible means to enhance it.

Opening the meeting, Secretary-General Ban stressed that, in countless disputes, diplomacy had enabled the parties to step back from the brink of conflict before it erupted, saving the country and the

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

international community untold lives, troops and money. The Council and all Member States should invest “up front” in United Nations mediation capacity so that more such diplomacy could be accomplished. The Council’s most positive contributions came when it was unified, prepared to use its leverage, when it supported one clear mediator and when it was ready to give the process time.

He said his good offices were always available to parties wishing to avail themselves of an honest broker who could help them remain on the sometimes difficult path to peace, or get back on it. A small Mediation Support Unit, established in the Department of Political Affairs, had already provided operational support to some 15 peace processes and was helping African regional organizations to strengthen their mediation capacities. As only two posts in the Unit were funded by the regular budget, the Council should ensure it received the requisite resources.

Describing lessons learned from his experience in mediation, Mr. Brahimi warned that the credibility of the United Nations suffered greatly when the mediation of certain conflicts was left unattended for long periods or not handled impartially. That was certainly the perception with respect to the Middle East peace process and several other conflicts. “The Organization’s universality, its impartiality and its consistent adherence to the principles enshrined in the [United Nations] Charter are the most powerful weapons in a UN mediator’s arsenal.”

Speakers shared their experience of mediation — either as parties to a conflict or as interested outside parties -- urging the further development of United Nations mediation capabilities. Many also urged that mediation be brought to the fore more frequently and much earlier than had been the case so far.

Heads of State and Government addressing the Council were Presidents Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso and Marin Torrijos of Panama, and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia.

Also speaking today were Foreign Ministers Karel de Gucht of Belgium, Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma of South Africa, Hassan Wirajuda of Indonesia, Franco Frattini of Italy and Bernard Kouchner of France. Alexander Yakovenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Mark Malloch Brown, Minister of State for Africa, Asia and United States Affairs of the United Kingdom also addressed the Council.

Other speakers in the Council today represented Viet Nam, United States, Libya, Costa Rica and China.

The meeting began at 3:10 p.m. and ended at 5:20 p.m.

Presidential Statement

The full text of presidential statement S/PRST/2008/36 reads as follows:

“The Security Council recalls the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirms its commitment to the pacific settlement of disputes, including through mediation, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VI. The Council recalls all its relevant previous statements and resolutions.

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

“The Security Council underlines the importance of mediation as a means of pacific settlement of disputes, and encourages the further use of this mechanism in the settlement of disputes. The Council reaffirms the crucial role of the United Nations in this regard.

“The Security Council affirms that, as the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it has a responsibility to promote and support mediation as an important means for the pacific settlement of disputes.

“The Security Council emphasises the importance of the actions undertaken by the Secretary-General in using his good offices and his representatives, special envoys, and United Nations mediators in promoting mediation and in the pacific settlement of disputes. The Council takes notes of the establishment of the Department of Political Affairs’ Mediation Support Unit, which provides expertise for supporting the mediation efforts of the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that mediation processes conducted by or under the auspices of the United Nations are guided by the Purposes and Principles of the Organization and that mediators are experienced, impartial, have a good knowledge of all the stakeholders, facts and circumstances of any dispute to which they have been assigned, and are provided with the necessary support and flexibility to approach mediation according to the specificities of the disputes; to this end, the Council encourages the Secretary-General to consider ways to strengthen the Secretariat’s capabilities.

“The Security Council notes the important contribution of regional and subregional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders to the pacific settlement of disputes, in particular through mediation, and commends them for their efforts. The Council is resolved to strengthen United Nations support to such mediation efforts through improved cooperation, in particular in Africa; the Council encourages other bilateral and multilateral partners to do likewise.

“The Security Council underlines the importance of engaging the potential and the existing capacities and capabilities of regional and subregional organizations in mediation efforts, and welcomes the promotion of regional approaches to the pacific settlement of disputes.

“The Security Council notes that women have an important role to play in the settlement of disputes, stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and calls upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of regional and subregional organizations to take into account the gender aspect during mediators selection, as well as the approach and perspective that women can render in mediation processes.

“The Security Council highlights the importance of considering peacebuilding and recovery requirements in the mediation process to help build the foundations for sustainable peace, and stresses that the Peacebuilding Commission has a role to play in the promotion of mediation.

“The Security Council emphasizes the need to ensure the coherence of mediation processes by or under the auspices of the United Nations, through the improved coordination of efforts with others actors, including regional and subregional organizations, in order to enhance the effectiveness of international efforts.

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

“The Security Council also stresses that no mediation initiative can be viable without ownership and full involvement of all relevant parties to the dispute throughout the process. The Council reaffirms that conflict prevention and pacific settlement of disputes should be at the core of mediation efforts.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to submit, within six months of the adoption of this statement, a report on mediation and its support activities, which takes into account experiences of the United Nations and other key actors, and makes recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations mediation.”

Background

Today’s high-level Security Council meeting addressed the topic “Mediation and settlement of disputes” under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”.

Members had before them a concept paper (document S/2008/590) distributed by the President, which notes that the increasingly frequent recourse to mediation, conducted by a wide variety of actors, has made it one of the principal alternatives for the settlement of conflicts. Mediation is one among a wide range of methods defined in Chapter VI, Article 33, of the United Nations Charter, and the Organization, with more than half a century’s experience, has established fairly effective mechanisms for the prevention and settlement of conflicts through mediation, including the 1992 Agenda for Peace and its 1998 Addendum; the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa; and the 2000 Brahimi report.

According to the paper, there are also mechanisms for mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes at the regional and subregional levels, where mediation has a greater likelihood of success, as the parties to a dispute and the mediator share the same geographical, historical, economic, social, cultural and demographic background. The international community should, therefore, provide support for the local process, especially financial and logistical support. A multitude of non-State structures also offer expertise in the general area of mediation and settlement of conflicts.

Despite the existence of so many actors that can be a wonderful source of enrichment regarding the approach to and conduct of the mediation process, the concept paper warns, they could also cause complications or even stall the mediation due to a lack of coordination. Discussion could focus on the role of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General in conducting mediation, and enhancement of that role; the contribution of regional and subregional organizations; support for regional mediation initiatives; and the role of women and civil society in the mediation process.

Statements

Council President BLAISE COMPAORE, President of Burkina Faso, spoke in his national capacity as he highlighted peaceful means as the mechanism of choice for the settlement of disputes, while calling on the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society, to draw on that principle in a world where the smallest crisis could cause instability. The heightened complexity of conflicts required the most innovative strategies. No mediation could succeed without the full participation of the parties, and the mediator must remain impartial and have knowledge of the conflict, as well as of the sociological

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

realities of the countries and regions concerned. That was why regional and subregional organizations could contribute effectively to mediation.

Comprehensive implementation of Council resolutions 1625 (2005) and 1809 (2008) would energize mediation efforts regionally and subregionally, he said. Multilateral and bilateral partners must support the mediator and each step of the process, in which the United Nations and the Council must play a critical role. Progress made in implementing the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire was due to the firm commitment of the signatories, the Council's support and the willingness of countries and institutions to support that effort. Mediation required confidence and coordination between the mediator, the parties, local actors and partners. There were three elements to mediating crises: the main parties must have ownership of the way out of a crisis; any final document must reassure each party and provide answers to the crisis; and any peace agreement needed follow-up mechanisms to overcome pitfalls that would undermine the peace process.

The mediator must remain alongside the parties and help them in a neutral way, he said. In addition, follow-up mechanisms must include dialogue frameworks. The main actors must also establish mechanisms to ensure synergy and avoid a waste of energy. In that regard, Burkina Faso looked to the African Union and the United Nations for a solution to the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Maintaining peace and security required an international environment conducive to ongoing dialogue, not only to prevent conflicts, but also to help manage and resolve them. A peaceful approach was necessary to settle disputes in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Africa. It was important for humanity to renew the values of tolerance, solidarity, dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

BAN KI-MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that, in the countless cases when the Organization had employed quiet diplomacy, it had enabled the parties to step back from the brink of conflict before it erupted, saving the country and the international community untold lives, troops and money. For that reason, the United Nations played a central role in mediating disputes and supporting regional and subregional organizations in those efforts.

He called upon the Council and all Member States to invest "up front" in the Organization's mediation capacity, so that more such diplomacy could be accomplished. The Council's most positive contributions came when it was unified, when it was prepared to use its leverage, when it supported one clear mediator, and when it was ready to give the process time, if that was needed.

Affirming that his good offices were always available to parties wishing to avail themselves of an honest broker who could help them stay or get back on the sometimes difficult path to peace, he said a small Mediation Support Unit had been established in the Department of Political Affairs and it had already provided operational support to some 15 peace processes. It was helping African regional organizations to strengthen their mediation capacities. As only two positions for that Unit were funded from the regular budget, the Council should assure it the resources it needed.

LAKHDAR BRAHIMI, former Special Adviser, said in his briefing to the Council that Africa had had more than its fair share of conflicts, some of which had been resolved. The situation in others had improved, but there was no room for complacency. "Far too many of our people are being killed, tortured, harassed, humiliated, sent into exile or internal displacement." Much remained to be done in ending conflict in Africa, consolidating peace and creating the conditions for sustainable development. With more than 100,000 peacekeepers deployed in 18 operations, most of them in Africa,

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

the United Nations was doing its part. “In order to enhance the prospects of success of these operations, or better still, obviate the need for their deployment, effective mediation is essential. And mediation does not end with the signing of a peace agreement — even a very successful one. It continues throughout the life cycle of a peace process.”

Regional organizations, including the African Union, had acquired remarkable skills in that area and were developing their own cooperation with civil society and the United Nations, he said, adding that the Organization remained the leading actor in that field. There were several principles at the heart of United Nations mediation, but it was quite challenging to adhere to them in practice. “For example, I believe that the mediator must understand a conflict in all its complexity before passing judgment and taking decisions. And he or she should recognize the importance that culture, tradition, price and ‘face’ play in all phases of the process.” One principle of mediation was that the mediator should include in the peace process all the parties to a conflict that were able to bring a halt to the fighting and/or plunge the country back into war.

At the 2001 Afghanistan peace talks, there had been immense pressure to conclude an agreement in a few days, although several months were required, he recalled. Nor had it been possible to pursue a genuinely inclusive political process because political realities demanded that. “But we also failed, later, to reach out to many constituencies who might have joined the political process. It should have been clear to us, all along, that those who were absent would have no stake in the success of the Agreement and would obstruct its implementation.”

A mediator should never act to placate his or her own ego, play to the media or prioritize the interests of external actors, he said, emphasizing the importance of putting the concerns and aspirations of all the people of the country concerned at the forefront. “In the case of Afghanistan, the interests of the Afghan people should override those of the UN, [the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)], the neighbours, or any other country. Actually, if the interests of the people of Afghanistan are thus served, exclusively and properly, you will see that everyone else’s interests will be very well served indeed.” That mediation should be inclusive and involve dialogue with all parties did not mean that any offence, by anyone, should be condoned or ignored.

He said a second principle of mediation was that the mediators’ hands were significantly strengthened if his or her principles and approaches were seen to be supported by all Council members as well as the wider United Nations membership. That meant in particular that there must be only one channel of communication. Conflicting messages could cause unnecessary, harmful confusion. In mediating the post-election crisis in Kenya, Kofi Annan had insisted firmly that no one else interfere, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had supported that approach fully. Everyone had accepted his lead and responded to his requests. The result had been the remarkable success achieved against almost impossible odds.

While impossible odds were generally faced by all mediation efforts, mistakes and setbacks were inevitable, he said. If a political deal was reached easily and without painful compromises by all sides, one should not ask if it would unravel, but when. The mediator should be given time and space to work out solutions and overcome prejudices. That meant standing firm against pre-cooked or hastily concluded agreements imposed from outside or which did not address the issues. “If you want to go fast, you need to move slowly.”

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

The credibility of the United Nations and the world's faith in its relevance suffered greatly when the mediation of certain conflicts was left unattended for long periods of time, or altogether ignored, he said. That was certainly the perception with respect to the Middle East peace process and several other conflicts. When the Security Council was perceived to be more concerned about the suffering of some over that of others, or employing "double standards", the credibility of the United Nations as a whole was affected. "The Organization's universality, its impartiality and its consistent adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter are the most powerful weapons in a UN mediator's arsenal. If you equip your mediators well, if you support them well, then they will be that much more likely to provide the help the victims of war demand and achieve the peace this Council seeks."

MARTÍN TORRIJOS ESPINO, President of Panama, said the United Nations had been created as a forum to peacefully overcome disputes, but it had often been used merely as a podium for interested parties. On other occasions, the Organization had spoken out against, or exerted pressure on, various parties involved in disputes. On far fewer occasions had it served its mediation role.

With regard to the problems of his country, which had long been kept as a colonial outpost by the United States, he said the United Nations had not acted as an effective mediator, but only as a conduit for the interests of the United States. Parties were more disposed to mediation if effective mechanisms and political resolve were in place. Panama called on Security Council members to reinforce the Organization's role as mediator and fulfil the role for which it had been created 63 years ago.

IVO SANADER, Prime Minister of Croatia, said his country's recent experiences demonstrated that mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes was part and parcel of conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. As such, mediation should be successfully integrated into the mandates of missions designed by the Security Council to help prevent and resolve conflicts. The nature of contemporary conflict had changed from an "inter-State to intra-State level", and the United Nations was now facing a different set of expectations and greater demand for its good offices and mediation. Additionally, the Organization was required to deal not only with overcoming tensions between opponents or belligerents, but also with offering solutions for transitional justice or constitution writing, and designing mechanisms for wealth-sharing or human rights protections.

Even in the absence of a specifically appointed individual tasked with a mediation or good offices mandate, he continued, the United Nations often found itself in the role of negotiator, intermediary or adviser through its political or military presence on the ground. Indeed, it was difficult to find a Council-mandated mission that did not include some aspect of diplomatic, mediatory or non-coercive engagement. The United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) was a telling example of what the United Nations could accomplish within a well-defined, realistic and achievable mandate.

However, Council-mandated missions required both effective mandates and adequate resources, he stressed. The Department of Political Affairs remained the centre of expertise on mediation, and Croatia welcomed recent steps designed to strengthen it. Strengthening local capacities for dispute resolution was equally important. Diplomatic and non-coercive methods of settling disputes went beyond the framework of the United Nations system, and the Organization could profit from the synergies of such a situation, as it had in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and the signing and implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. The potential role of regional and subregional groups in

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

peacekeeping and the settlement of disputes should be further explored by the Council, as the geographical proximity of those groups and their familiarity with the context of conflicts often made them well suited to approach the parties to a conflict.

Recent trends were cause for hope that the Council would be able to expand further and better integrate its efforts into its strategies and actions, he continued. Still, for every success there was a “static situation” with the potential to damage the credibility of the United Nations and cause the Council to re-examine its strategies and commitment. For example, despite positive signals from Cyprus and in the case of the Darfur talks, it was “disappointing to note that, after almost a year of repeated attempts to engage with Myanmar, the United Nations efforts fall short of tangible results”. A well-managed effort to attain peace through the establishment of a viable political process should be an integral part of the Council’s peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies, but it should not come at the expense of other values that the Organization was founded to promote and protect.

KAREL DE GUCHT, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, said history showed there was 50 per cent more chance to solve a crisis if the instrument of mediation was used. The rapid deployment of a compact, but well-equipped, team of mediators could avoid a substantial number of extensive, costly missions. Above all, it could prevent atrocities, and the United Nations clearly had a central role to play in that field. Belgium had made consistent efforts to ensure that the Council could contribute efficiently to the defusing of emerging crises.

He said it was difficult to accept that the Secretary-General should have only limited resources to act. Often he was reduced to having to appeal for ad hoc arrangements, and Belgium hoped agreement could be reached on the urgent need to shore up his capacity for mediation. Doing so would necessitate the development of a pool of experts who could be certain of receiving the resources they required. Those “peacekeeping firemen” must remain on stand-by so they could make a vigorous effort to quash nascent conflicts before it was too late.

Regional and subregional organizations also had a role to play, he said, highlighting the actions taken by the French presidency on behalf of the European Union in Georgia, South Africa’s role in Zimbabwe, former Secretary-General Annan’s initiative in Kenya and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) humanitarian role in Burma. One must also be able, when appropriate, to cross “institutional borders” and turn to suitable non-governmental organizations such as San’Egidio or the Carter Center. History had shown that excluding women from the processes that led to a peace agreement, they would also be excluded in the phases that followed. Mediation teams should, therefore, include more women.

NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, stressed the important role of regional organizations, noting that, for effective mediation, the roles of all interested parties should be clearly defined. Once mediation started, all other parties should play a supporting role. Mediation must keep the parties focused on arriving at an acceptable compromise, and as they must arrive at that point by themselves, all interested outside parties should dispense with “the rescuer syndrome”.

It was also important for mediation not to be unduly pressured, either to unnecessarily reveal confidential information, or to move the process towards already identified conclusions, she said. Direct intervention by others taking sides or influencing the parties could be a major obstacle to resolving the

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

dispute. The test of the mediation's success should be the durability of the agreements entered into, so parties should be allowed the time they needed to find the most lasting solution.

An important role for the Security Council in that regard was supporting the mediation process once mediators had been appointed, particularly if they were appointed by regional organizations, she said. The Council should avoid the temptation to pre-empt the outcome of mediation efforts through the use of the coercive tools at its disposal. South Africa endorsed the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs to support regional mediation efforts, particularly in Africa.

N. HASSAN WIRAJUDA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said the conflicts raging around the world would never end if dialogue did not take the place of violence. But, because dialogue was never easy between active combatants, trusted mediators with the skill to guide the process to a just and comprehensive conclusion were necessary for the process to be successful.

Highlighting his country's experience in mediation, he cited his own experience as Chair of the mixed committee that had negotiated a peace agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front, ending two decades of separatist rebellion in that country. In the late 1980s, Indonesia had launched a process to fashion a solution to Cambodia's decades-long civil war, which had eventually resulted in a peace agreement and the rebirth of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

He said his country had also launched a yearly series of informal workshops on managing potential conflict in the South China Sea, which had led, in turn, to the adoption of a code of conduct for China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and greater stability in the area. Such success had been possible because Indonesia had been trusted by all sides and undertaken its mediation efforts with considerable informality out of the limelight.

Nevertheless, none of Indonesia's mediation experience could compare with the more vast experience of the United Nations and its many special representatives, special envoys and eminent persons, he said. If properly funded and endorsed by Member States, a mediation unit could also enlarge the Organization's capacity to detect and prevent potential conflicts. The United Nations could also team up with regional organizations, combining its resources and experience with their intimate knowledge of the socio-political terrain. The ASEAN countries were ripe for such a partnership. Indonesia had learned its mediation lessons well and recognized that peace in its province of Aceh existed today because of successful mediation by the Helsinki Crisis-Management Initiative.

FRANCO FRATTINI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, said the Council must strengthen and improve its mechanism for interacting with the Secretary-General and his representatives and special envoys in various Chapter VI actions. The close relations between peace and security on the one hand, and development, human rights and rule of law on the other meant that other United Nations agencies also must support mediation efforts. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had a contribution to make, as did the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, particularly in the implementation of peace agreements.

He said his country supported the strengthening of that capacity, particularly the Mediation Support Unit within the Department of Political Affairs. The Council should invite the mediators appointed by regional organizations more frequently to report on their efforts. One effective modality was the appointment of joint mediators holding the mandate of the regional organization concerned, as

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

well as that of the United Nations. They would be more knowledgeable about local realities while mediation under the aegis of the United Nations would give them universal legitimacy and political support.

Italy's experience in Mozambique had taught that the active role of civil society was a key element of successful mediation, he said. Close attention should be paid to the role that women could play. Mediation did not stop with the signing of a peace agreement, but should accompany implementation in what could be called "micro mediation". It was a question of settling a wide variety of problems -- including humanitarian issues, elections and protection of minorities -- that often reflected closely the factors that constituted the roots of conflict.

BERNARD KOUCHNER, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, stressed that successful mediation could not be determined through scientific formulas, and recalled the assassination of Folke Bernadotte, "the first representative of the United Nations to give his life in the attempt to find resolutions through dialogue and cooperation". Others, including Dag Hammarskjöld and Sergio Vieira de Mello had followed. Strengthening United Nations mediation would honour their efforts.

The personal qualities of mediators were crucial, including the ability to adapt and to remain credible and neutral, he said. The establishment of a mediation unit was indeed progress, but it must be kept progressing. Mediation successes in humanitarian access should be remembered, as should the many mediation efforts that had partially succeeded. The European Union had strong mediation capabilities which should be used more frequently. Sanctions and peacekeeping forces could also be used in ways that buttressed mediation efforts. In addition, successful mediation must be followed by sustained peacebuilding efforts.

ALEXANDER YAKOVENKO, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, paid tribute to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, acting as the President of the European Union, for his "sobering influence" on the Georgian leadership and the excellent manner in which he had performed his function as a mediator. Russian mediation efforts during conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union had been focused first of all on achieving an initial settlement with the aim of reaching the main objective: to cease fire and stop the bloodshed and destruction of property.

Mediators normally did their utmost to work out preliminary arrangements on the basis of areas on which the parties could agree, he said. Acting in good faith, they should be impartial and, above all, strictly observe confidentiality. One should not impose unilateral decisions nor give reason to believe a mediator was biased. Failure by a mediator to comply with any of those requirements would inevitably create problems. "It is enough to recall how the Kosovo settlement went about." Events in the Caucasus had demonstrated that modern conflicts could not be solved by the use of force. "In that regard, we have always insisted on the agreement on the non-use of force between Tbilisi, Abkhazia and South Ossetia."

Citing examples of the increasing role of mediators, he mentioned the declining number of conflicts in Africa, as well as Timor-Leste, the settlement in Aceh and the comprehensive political agreement in Zimbabwe. Mediation required great skill and a combination of persistence, tact, historical, cultural and other specific knowledge of the conflict, and — no less important — patience. "The mediator, even if compelled at times to be tough, should not use gross interference or violate the legitimate rights or interests of any of the parties." Existing experience of conflict settlement clearly

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

demonstrated that only a mediator who did not rely on violence or the imposition of terms, but who aimed at bringing the positions of the parties closer and reaching mutually acceptable understandings, had a chance to succeed.

MARK MALLOCH BROWN, Minister of State for Africa, Asia and United Nations Affairs of the United Kingdom, said the failure to generate durable peace agreements through effective mediation often resulted in resumed war and, for that reason, the emphasis on mediation was growing. The United Kingdom, therefore, backed the creation of the new Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs, greater support for mediation by regional organizations and the Secretary-General's efforts in Kenya and Burma.

Welcoming the appointment of a joint mediator for Darfur, he said that official should become the centre of the Darfur peace process. The United Kingdom also welcomed recent agreements in Zimbabwe, which was crucial for progress on the ground, and would offer its support if such progress became evident. Mediation required strong leadership, support and resources for that leadership. Mediation had often fallen apart for the lack of an implementation plan and coherence in subsequent actions. For that reason, the United Kingdom hoped to see a strengthening of the Security Council's the role throughout all stages of a conflict.

LE LUONG MINH (Viet Nam) said the United Nations had been established to save humanity from the scourge of war by settling disputes through peaceful means. Mediation had been codified in international law and was used at all levels -- international, multilateral and bilateral. It had been increasingly deployed as an effective tool for resolving conflicts. Cambodia, Haiti, Angola, Mozambique and most recently Kenya and Zimbabwe bore witness to the effectiveness of mediation efforts.

He said that, with the establishment of the Mediation Support Unit, the United Nations had furthered its mediation activities. Viet Nam was committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, including through mediation, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter. They should be conducted with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and in an impartial way.

ZALMAY KHALILZAD (United States), paying tribute to the contributions of Burkina Faso and its President in recent peace negotiations, said his country favoured the strengthening of international capacity for the peaceful mediation of disputes, and had strongly supported the adoption of resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention in Africa. The United States had invested in its own capabilities in conflict prevention and was coordinating with regional organizations to help them do the same.

There was even greater potential for the United States and regional organizations to resolve disputes through mediation, he said. In the most serious crises, however, there was often no substitute for the application of political will on the part of States. In the case of post-conflict countries, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission was crucial to the coordination of efforts to keep countries from falling back into violence. However, the United States was not wedded to any particular theory of how the peaceful resolution of disputes should be accomplished; rather, a pragmatic approach was needed.

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

GIADALLA ETTALHI (Libya) said that today's meeting was intertwined with efforts by African leaders to secure lasting peace and security on the continent, without which sustainable development would not be possible. Mediation was the alternative that could guarantee an end to a conflict or prevent one at minimum cost. Mediation, however, must keep in mind the interest of local parties. Its non-binding nature, combined with other peaceful means of settlement, did not undermine its importance. Mediation allowed parties to reconsider and move forward towards settlement.

He said the effectiveness of mediation depended on the mediator's impartiality and knowledge of the historical and cultural background of a conflict, which was best provided by regional organizations. The international community, however, had not yet achieved a true partnership with Africa where resources were integrated. The noble efforts of the Secretary-General were still not up to par in terms of logistical support for African capacities. The African Union should be a model for United Nations ties with regional organizations in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security.

JORGE URBINA (Costa Rica), paying tribute to Burkina Faso's mediation efforts, stressed the importance of regional organizations on all continents and the need for greater resources in the area of conflict prevention, including preventive diplomacy. Allocating 2 per cent of the peacekeeping budget to preventive activities was an idea that merited consideration. So far, the resources devoted to conflict prevention paled in comparison to the \$7 billion spent on peacekeeping every year. Opposition to preventive action based on budgetary and non-interventionist grounds were mistaken.

The Secretary-General's good offices were often weakened when they were exercised in cooperation with other United Nations organs or third parties, he said. Regional organizations could be good partners for the Secretary-General's good offices under certain conditions. There was a difference between situations in which the Secretary-General acted upon request by outside parties and those in which the parties themselves asked for such assistance. Costa Rica would support any effort that strengthened United Nations mediation capacity, as well as any support for the strengthening of regional organizations in that regard.

LIU ZHENMIN (China) said the Security Council should devote more attention to its role in preventive diplomacy, noting that it cost far less to defuse international conflicts by preventive means such as mediation than to deploy peacekeeping operations after conflicts erupted. It also produced much better results. In the future, the Council should follow closely matters brought to its attention by Member States and the Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, and work out a comprehensive preventive strategy in light of each particular crisis. Mediators should remain neutral and the international community should back them with constructive support.

Experience had shown that neutrality and fairness constituted the basic conditions for successful mediation, he continued. When its integrity was tainted by self-interest or compromised by partiality, mediation could not bring lasting peace. On the contrary, it would only complicate the situation further. Mediators should have an in-depth understanding of the situation and respect the views of all parties concerned. Given that the causes of conflicts were complex, it was unrealistic to expect mediation to produce quick results with only a few rounds of efforts. In the Middle East, for instance, the international community was still seeking a way out after decades of mediation. Mediators should be provided with an environment free from media pressure, and the parties should refrain from exerting

2009 Sample Examination (P-2)
PUBLIC INFORMATION

pressure on them, lest the progress achieved by the mediation be lost. When factions resisted mediation, States with influence over them should do their part to collaborate with the mediators' efforts.

He said regional and subregional organizations like the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had made unremitting efforts in mediating and settling African conflicts. However, the peace efforts of those organizations were often constrained by a lack of resources. China called upon the United Nations to respond more positively to the reasonable requests of Africa and give high priority to capacity-building in its cooperation with that continent. The Organization should enhance its cooperation with the African Union and subregional organizations in the areas of training, institution-building, information and experience sharing, and logistical support. There should be effective implementation of the 10-Year Programme of Capacity-Building between the United Nations and the African Union, in addition to a mobilization of international donors to provide more support to Africa.

Important as it was, mediation was not a panacea, he cautioned, pointing out that in many cases, it could only build a bridge between the parties concerned. While it might not be able to build up trust and goodwill among various parties, mediation could dispel suspicion and misunderstanding. While it might not lead to peace, it could serve to avoid conflict. Real situations required all parties concerned to demonstrate good will and walk towards each other. Fundamentally, a lasting settlement of any dispute required an integrated approach, including parallel efforts to achieve economic development, reduce poverty, enhance administrative capacity, advocate the culture of reconciliation and promote justice. China stood for the proper settlement of disputes by peaceful means, such as mediation, dialogue and negotiations. It supported efforts to that end on the part of the United Nations, regional organizations and the countries concerned.

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