

**ADDRESS BY H.E. MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

THIRD OIC MEMBER STATES CONFERENCE ON MEDIATION

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(Check Against Delivery)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Essalamun aleykum ve rahmetullah ve barakatu.

It is a pleasure to address such a distinguished audience at the Third OIC Member States Conference on Mediation.

Welcome to Istanbul, a fascinating city with unique beauty. No wonder, our ancestors used to refer to this city as Dersaadet, meaning the “Gateway to Happiness.”

However, we must also acknowledge the stark contrast between what we experience in this country and what lies beyond.

The unbearable human tragedy in Syria is just across our borders.

There are many other conflicts around the world which attract less attention, because they seem to be “far away” to some.

Yet, in this day and age, no place is too far.

The need for preventive diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflicts is great.

We promote mediation in our Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy for a long time.

Built upon our own experiences from various bilateral and regional facilitation and dialogue mechanisms, we first started promoting mediation and raising awareness at the UN.

Together with Finland, we launched the Mediation for Peace initiative and formed the UN Group of Friends of Mediation 10 years ago. This group now has 59 members.

As I said yesterday, the support of the Group led to the adoption of 4 different UN General Assembly resolutions on mediation.

Besides the UN, we took action to contribute to the mediation agenda of the OSCE, as well.

Last but not least, we focus on enriching the mediation capacity of the OIC.
Why the OIC?

Firstly, we believe that the OIC has a huge potential. After all, the OIC is the second largest international organization after the UN, in terms of its geographical and demographic coverage.

Secondly, 60% of current conflicts unfortunately takes place in the OIC geography. This puts a heavy responsibility on our shoulders.

Thirdly, regional and sub-regional organizations are increasingly assuming a more prominent role in mediation.

They have distinct advantages with their special geographic, cultural and historical tenets to be utilized in different conflict situations.

How are we doing at the OIC?

Our work did not take off from nothing.

The Organization has been aware of the importance of mediation and has long been an effective player in the field with the Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution Unit (PSCU).

Several of our members have solid mediation experience in the field.

However, there is room for capacity building and further professionalization.

Therefore, we focused on mediation in a more systematic and structured manner under the Summit Chairmanship of Turkey. We have come a long way together with the Secretariat and the Member States.

We led the adoption of two landmark Council of Foreign Ministers Resolutions in 2018 and 2019 on mediation.

These Resolutions were crucial as they seal and confirm the need to build and strengthen the mediation capacity of the OIC.

We established the OIC Contact Group of Friends of Mediation, which very soon became one of the largest Contact Groups of the Organization.

We launched a dedicated Mediation Conference series for the OIC family in Istanbul to think together.

Thinking together is the first step for acting together.

We also designed and hosted “Mediation for Peace” certificate training programs to raise the next generation mediators of the OIC.

In September, I attended the graduation ceremony of the second edition and personally handed over certificates to young and promising mediators.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Ladies and gentlemen,

These are our joint achievements but we cannot stop there.

In two back-to-back resolutions, OIC Council of Ministers mandated the Secretariat to prepare a Code of Conduct for mediators on culturally sensitive approaches.

Early this summer, OIC Contact Group of Friends of Mediation suggested a road-map for the timely preparation of the code of conduct.

As a first step, SESRIC organized a stimulating brainstorming session in Ankara in September. My team prepared a draft to help the discussions.

This issue will be explored in depth in today's conference with a view to contributing to the way ahead in the OIC's work.

Following the keynote speech by the Assistant Secretary General of the OIC, Ambassador Al-Doubaey, you will also have a presentation by the High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the High Representative, Moratinos, for prioritizing peaceful resolution of conflict and mediation.

The Conference will also feature two distinguished names with wealth of experience from the field.

I believe Minister Nasser Judeh's and Ambassador Apakan's insights will shed light to the need for human-centric approaches to conflict resolution.

I have the privilege to have worked with them.

The Third OIC Member States Conference on Mediation is yet another demonstration of the OIC ownership in humanity's search for sustainable peace and development.

Turkey will remain ready to contribute to these efforts and help further enhance the mediation agenda at our organization.

I welcome you once again to Istanbul and wish you fruitful discussions today. Thank you very much.