



Centre for Mediation in Africa

Activity Report No. 1: September 2011 – February 2012

In September 2011 the Centre for Mediation in Africa was established in the Department of Political Sciences with a generous grant from the Government of Belgium. The Director is Prof Laurie Nathan, who previously headed the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town. He was a member of the AU-UN mediation for Darfur in 2005-6 and 2010.

The Centre has two senior associates, Dr Andries Odendaal and Dr Clever Nyathi:

- Over the past decade Dr Nyathi has been engaged by the UN in peacemaking, peacebuilding, governance and election roles in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. He is currently Senior Advisor to the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration in Zimbabwe.
- Dr Odendaal has extensive experience in peacemaking, including as a senior trainer at the Centre for Conflict Resolution. In 2009 he was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the US Institute for Peace. In 2011 he was contracted by UNDP to assess the church-led mediation in Lesotho. He was also the primary drafter of the report on political dialogue commissioned by the OECD-sponsored International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. He is currently advisor to UN Under-Secretary-General Sahle-Work Zewde in her capacity as facilitator of the national dialogue in Malawi.

In September the Centre, in partnership with the Department of Political Sciences and the University's Centre for Human Rights, hosted a panel discussion on 'Libya, the UN, the AU and South Africa'. The keynote speaker was South Africa's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Ebrahim Ebrahim, who presented a critique of the UN-sanctioned bombing of Libya by NATO.

Centre for Mediation in Africa

(T) +27 12 420 2464

(F) +27 12 420 3886

(E) laurie.nathan@up.ac.za

(P) Private Bag X20, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028, South Africa

In September Prof Nathan delivered a paper at the seminar on 'Conflict Mediation in Africa', co-organised by SADC, the Embassy of France and the University of Botswana. Since 2007 Prof Nathan has been involved in designing SADC's mediation support structures.

In October the Centre and the Department of Political Sciences hosted a public address by President Jacob Zuma. He presented key aspects of South Africa's foreign policy, including the government's stance on the controversy surrounding the position of the UN and the AU on Libya. The meeting was chaired by the Rector of the University, Prof Cheryl de la Rey, and the Senate Hall was packed with diplomats, faculty, students and media. This was an important opportunity for public accountability, with members of the audience able to put critical questions to the President.

In November the Centre held its first Senior Government Mediation Training Workshop, which covered conflict analysis, designing and planning a mediation process, and mediation strategy and facilitation. The participants included ambassadors and senior officials from nine African countries. The Centre's workshops are distinguished by their practical focus on high-level mediation in Africa, drawing on the field experience of Dr Odendaal, Dr Nyathi and Prof Nathan.

In November Dr Odendaal was one of the trainers at a conflict resolution workshop in Addis Ababa, organised by UNITAR in collaboration with the AU.

In February 2012 Prof Nathan was the lead resource person at an IGAD workshop in Addis Ababa, held to discuss the development of the organisation's mediation rosters. The workshop was attended by officials from the IGAD member states and secretariat. Prof Nathan has been assisting IGAD to build its mediation capacity and expertise since 2007.

While in Addis, Prof Nathan led two days of teaching and discussion on mediation and peacemaking at the Executive Post-Graduate Course on Managing Peace and Security. This course is organised by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the University of Addis Ababa, in collaboration with the AU Department of Peace and Security.

In February Dr Nyathi completed his delivery of a train-the-trainers programme in conflict transformation for the newly established Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Kenya. He then supervised the training of over 200 constituency election co-ordinators and regional election co-ordinators.

In February Prof Nathan travelled to Nepal where he assisted local stakeholders who are interested in the development of a national security policy. He participated as an international expert in a workshop with representatives from the Nepalese army, political parties and civil society organisations.

In February Prof Nathan's book on regional security arrangements – *Community of Insecurity: SADC's Struggle for Peace and Security in Southern Africa* – was published by Ashgate. A book launch will be held at Chatham House in London in March, and book launches will also be organised in Cape Town and Pretoria later in the year.

Prof Nathan completed a declaration and set of operational guidelines on the theme of UN-AU mediation partnerships, commissioned by the UN Mediation Support Unit in 2009. It is envisaged that the declaration will be signed by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission. This project aims to contribute to preventing, or at least mitigating, the tension that has characterised relations between the UN and the AU in many African conflicts.

In February the Centre announced the results of the call for proposals for its new working paper series, *Mediation Arguments*. The following applicants were successful:

- Rachel Gasser and David Lanz, 'A Crowded Field: Competition between Mediators and the Search for Peace'.
- Kwaku Nuamah, 'Re-visiting the Context versus Agency Debate in the Determination of Mediation Outcomes: Insights and Lessons from the Ivory Coast Mediation of 2010-2011'.
- Andries Odendaal, 'The Promise and Challenges of Internal Mediation in National Conflict in Africa'.
- Richard Smith, 'Insider Mediators and Electoral Conflicts in Africa'.
- Franzisca Zanker, 'Legitimate Representation in the Mediation of Power-Sharing Agreements'.
- Maxwell Zhira, 'Interrogating the Efficacy of SADC and Thabo Mbeki's "Quiet Diplomacy" in Zimbabwe'.

In March the Centre will present for the first time its Honours module on mediation, with over 20 students having registered for the course.

In April the Centre will host a consultative workshop on the forthcoming report by the UN Secretary-General on the topic of effective mediation. The report was requested by the General Assembly in 2011 through resolution 65/283. The workshop will be held in collaboration with the UN Mediation Support Unit, and the inputs made at the workshop will be fed into the Unit's consultations on the report.