



## Call for Proposals: Academic Conference on International Mediation, University of Pretoria, 2015

The Centre for Mediation in Africa (CMA) at the University of Pretoria, the Global South Unit for Mediation (GSUM) at the Institute of International Relations of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, and swisspeace in Berne are pleased to announce a Call for Papers for an academic conference on international mediation to be held at the University of Pretoria on 5 – 7 May 2015.

The Conference aims to deepen understanding of contemporary international mediation and contribute to more effective mediation in practice. Proposals for papers are invited on the following themes and indicative questions:

### 1. *Mediation research methodology and impact*

Mediation research does not appear to have had a substantial impact on the practice of international mediation.

- Why has mediation research largely failed to impact on practice?
- How could research better inform the practice of mediation?
- What theoretical frameworks and research methods are best suited to drawing lessons from mediation experience?
- What kinds of research or research findings have mediators found useful?

### 2. *Mediation as the management of complexity*

International mediation is a highly complex undertaking. Comprehending and managing this complexity arguably holds the key to effective mediation.

- Does research on mediation capture adequately the complexity of mediating in intra-state conflict?
- Does complexity theory or systems theory offer insights into the challenges of mediation?
- How well have mediators managed the complexity of mediation in specific cases?
- What conceptual, analytical, strategic or organisational tools have helped mediators to manage complexity?
- What structures and methods have best enabled mediators to analyse and monitor a conflict at the requisite level of sophistication?

### 3. *Mediation, culture and religion*

Mediators have been accused of reinforcing a universalized vision of the state and state-citizen relationships to the detriment of particular values and modes of life as determined by culture and religion.

- Is international mediation determined by universalizing models of peacebuilding and justice, or is there sufficient flexibility to allow for particular modes of life as determined by culture and religion?
- What are the implications for mediation of different cultural or religious understandings of conflict resolution, justice, reconciliation, etc?
- What are the barriers to effective negotiations and mediation when different cultures are involved in a conflict?
- How should international mediators adapt their strategies and processes in light of national or local cultural or religious practices and understandings?

### 4. *Mediation and the challenge of international norms*

The normative framework for international mediation is growing, with the 2012 UN Guidance for Effective Mediation as a prime example. Mediators are required not only to end violent conflict but also to promote and integrate a variety of norms into their work.

- What are the practical implications and challenges of the UN's normative framework for mediation?
- How have different norms (e.g. gender equality, inclusivity, transitional justice, etc.) influenced mediation processes?
- What is the role of mediators in relation to normative frameworks: should they push for certain norms? If yes, which ones?
- Do mediators have a normative or moral obligation regarding the substance of an agreement?

For a more detailed discussion of the themes indicated above, you can view the Conference concept paper at [www.centreformediation.up.ac.za](http://www.centreformediation.up.ac.za).

If you wish to present a paper at the Conference, please submit a proposal not exceeding 4 pages before 19 December 2014. The proposal should indicate a strong empirical grounding as well as familiarity with the academic literature on mediation.

The proposals will be assessed on academic grounds by members of the host organisations.

Notification of acceptance of proposals will be made by mid-January 2015.

The deadline for submission of papers is 17 April 2015.

Submissions should be sent to [andries.odendaal@imagnet.co.za](mailto:andries.odendaal@imagnet.co.za).