

# Evaluation of cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions

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Report number IED-25-003



## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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## Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services assessed the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the contributions of seven cluster I SPMs to mitigate the risk of violent conflict. The evaluation covered the period from 2021 to 2024.

SPMs were uniquely positioned to convene stakeholders and facilitate dialogue in large part due to their perceived comparative advantages of legitimacy, credibility, and impartiality. This positioning enabled them to employ a diverse range of modalities to engage with a broad spectrum of stakeholders from parties to the conflict to geopolitical actors, intergovernmental bodies, and civil society. The nature of the conflicts cluster I SPMs addressed meant that they were at times faced with evolving mandates and changes in their operating environments; the lack of clear strategic direction in most SPMs at times hampered their ability to appropriately respond to these shifts.

The broader efforts of the SPMs to mitigate the risk of violent conflict yielded mixed results, reflecting the inherent complexity of the conflicts they addressed and the limits of their influence in the face of growing trends in geopolitical polarization and regionalization of conflicts. The Yemen truce brokered by OSESG-Yemen was one of the few examples of significant achievements in this regard, and the mission in Cyprus was illustrative of successful efforts to build trust between the parties to the conflict under the Good Offices of the Secretary-General.

Most SPMs were challenged to enhance inclusivity in their work, which was important for the broader social buy-in to peace processes as well as for sustaining peace agreements in the long term. The Office of the Special Envoy for Syria was one successful example of effectively developing and implementing mechanisms for broadening inclusion with civil society and women.

SPMs have effectively leveraged partnerships with the UN and external stakeholders to expand the scope and reach of their activities and deliver on their mandates. Collaboration between the SPMs themselves, however, was perceived at times to be lacking.

OIOS makes three important recommendations:

- (a) For DPPA to update guidance on minimum requirements for strategic planning
- (b) For SPMs to implement the updated guidance on minimum requirements for planning
- (a) For DPPA and SPMs to ensure that existing mechanisms and fora are leveraged to meet the information sharing needs of the SPMs.

## I. Introduction and objective

1. The overall objective of this Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluation was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the following seven Cluster 1 conflict-specific Special Political Missions (SPMs):
  - i. Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus (OSASG-Cyprus)
  - ii. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara (PESG-Western Sahara)
  - iii. Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (OESG-1559)
  - iv. Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions (UNRGID)
  - v. Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (OSE-Syria)
  - vi. Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESG-Yemen)
  - vii. Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar (OESG-Myanmar)

The evaluation conforms with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System.

2. Comments on the draft report were sought from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the SPMs in the evaluation and were considered in the final report. The DPPA and SPM management responses are included in Annex I. OIOS wishes to acknowledge and thank the evaluation focal points who assisted in the conduct of this evaluation.

## II. Background

### *Mandate, objectives, structure and stakeholders*

3. Cluster 1 SPMs have been established over the years by relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as Exchanges of letters between the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council in response to conflicts, as shown in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Sources of Mandates of Thematic Cluster I SPMs*

	OSASG-Cyprus	PESG-Western Sahara	OESG-1559	UNRGID	OSE-Syria	OESG-Yemen	OESG-Myanmar
<b>Security Council Resolutions</b>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓	
<b>General Assembly Resolutions</b>					✓		✓

*Source: Document Review*

4. Cluster I SPMs are mandated to support political processes, facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders, and contribute to efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation,

or recurrence of violent conflict. Table 2 below provides a summary of the objectives across the seven missions included in this evaluation.

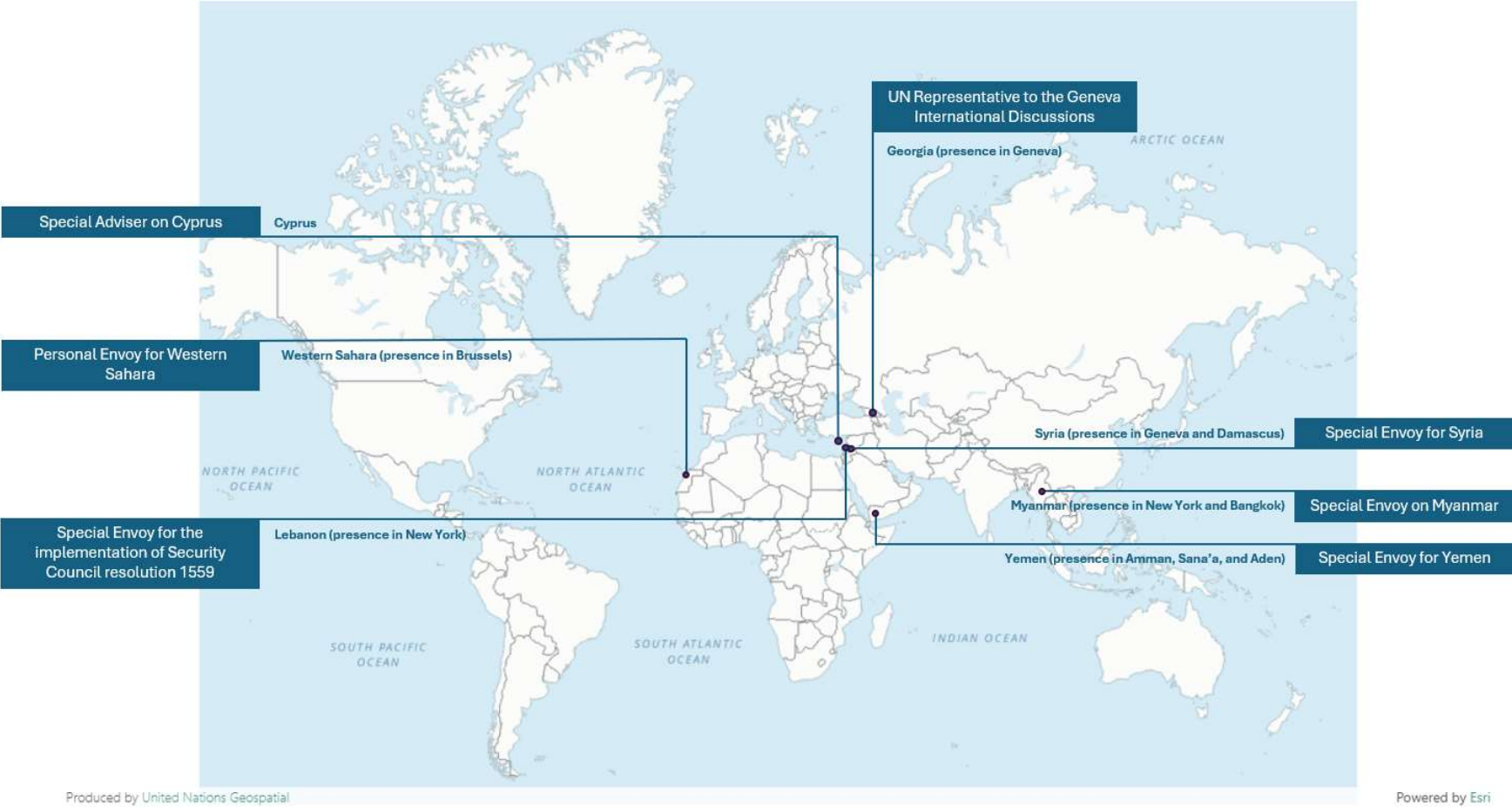
*Table 2: Objectives of Thematic Cluster I SPMs*

	Objectives
OSASG-Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the parties to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the situation in Cyprus.</li> <li>Bring Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders and communities closer together, to facilitate dialogue and find opportunities for cooperation.</li> </ul>
OSESG-Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support a Myanmar-led politically negotiated solution to the conflict.</li> <li>Support the creation of the conditions necessary for the safe, dignified and sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingya in Myanmar.</li> </ul>
OSE-Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate an inclusive, comprehensive and credible Syrian-owned and -led political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic that will meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for dignity, freedom and justice based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.</li> </ul>
OSESG-Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve a negotiated political settlement between the parties to end the conflict in Yemen and enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition that will lead Yemenis towards a path of sustainable peace.</li> </ul>
PESG-Western Sahara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.</li> </ul>
UNRGID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance the main agenda items of the Geneva International Discussions, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the non-use of force,</li> <li>international security arrangements, and</li> <li>addressing the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees in the context of the Discussions and the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
OSESG-1559	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure full implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and all subsequent related resolutions of the Council, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support for free and fair elections in Lebanon,</li> <li>disarmament of militias,</li> <li>withdrawal of foreign forces, and</li> <li>strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Source: OIOS Document Review*

- Cluster I SPMs are geographically dispersed, reflecting the United Nations' efforts to address conflicts and support peace processes in diverse contexts. Figure 1 below illustrates the geographic distribution of these missions, highlighting their presence and areas of engagement.

Figure 1: Geographical locations of Cluster 1 SPM offices, and Areas of Conflict



6. The key activities of the SPMs can be organized into five broad categories:
- a) Facilitation of intergovernmental processes and expert bodies;
  - b) Analysis;
  - c) Engagement with relevant stakeholders (Good Offices);
  - d) Training and advisory services; and
  - e) Communication.
7. Each SPM is led by a 'Special Envoy', Special Adviser', 'Personal Envoy' or 'United Nations Representative', who is appointed by the Secretary-General and is responsible for the overall leadership and direction of the mission. As of February 2025, all missions had a Head of Mission, except for OSASG-Cyprus, which was headed by the Deputy Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Additionally, in the case of OSESG-1559, the function of Head of Mission had been carried out by the Under Secretary-General (USG) of DPPA since 2016. The leadership of cluster 1 SPMs are supported by their respective offices, as well as 'backstopped' by desk officers through the shared DPPA-DPO structure.
8. The cluster 1 SPMs budget is subsumed under Part II, Section 3 of the United Nations Secretariat programme budget.<sup>1</sup> Table 3 below shows the resources and staff for each SPM in 2024.

*Table 3: Distribution of Programme Budgets and Staff, 2023-2024 (Unit: USD)*

SPM	Financial Resources	Posts <sup>2</sup>
	2024 Appropriation	2024 Approved Total (P-staff and above)
OSESG-Yemen	16,570,800	101 (34)
OSE-Syria	13,660,700	86 (36)
OSASG-Cyprus	3,056,500	21 (11) <sup>3</sup>
UNRGID	2,032,100	7 (6)
OSESG-Myanmar	1,365,300	5 (4)
PESG-Western Sahara	561,800	2 (2)
OSESG-1559	414,200	3 (2) <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,661,400</b>	<b>225 (95)</b>

Source: A/79/6 (Sect.3)/Add.2

9. As noted, resource levels of Cluster I SPMs varied. To further contextualize their capacity, the SPMs were also categorized into tiers, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their resource levels and operational scope. Figure 2 illustrates this tiered classification.

<sup>1</sup> See A/79/6 (Sect.3)/Add. 2

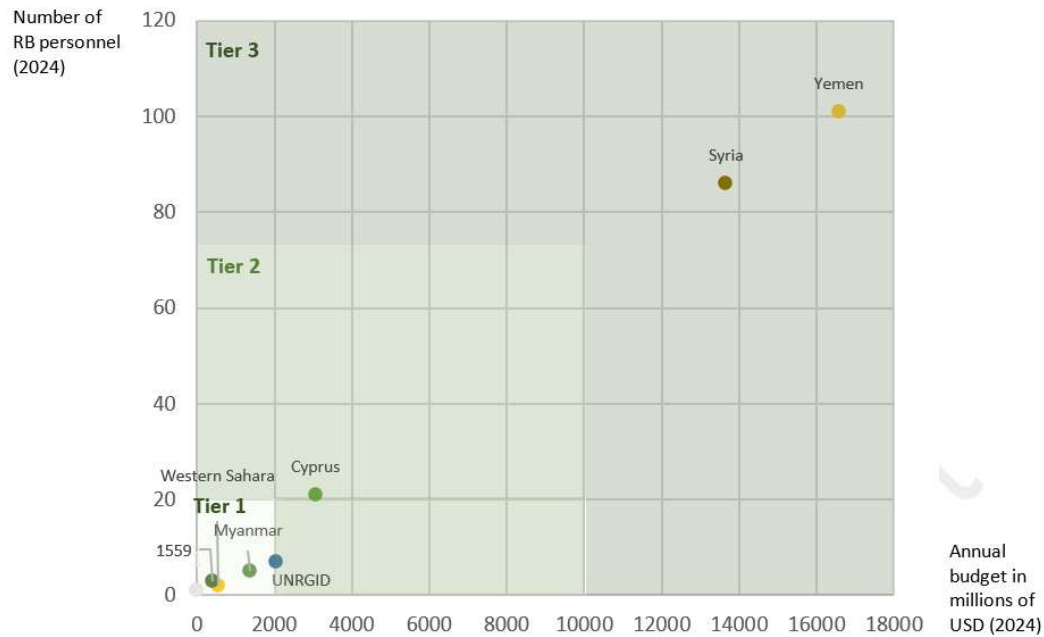
<sup>2</sup> Approved posts include required vacancy rate, therefore actual occupancy rate may be lower.

<sup>3</sup> The Special Adviser is on a "when-actually-employed" contract. This post had been vacant since 2017; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNFICYP is also the Deputy Special Adviser to Secretary-General in charge of the Good Offices Mission.

<sup>4</sup> The Under-Secretary-General is on a \$1-per-year contract.



Figure 2: Tiers of Resources in Cluster 1 Country-Specific SPMS



10. Operating in complex and often volatile environments, Cluster 1 SPMs engage with national, regional, and international actors to promote inclusive political solutions, strengthen governance, enhance the protection of human rights, and foster inclusive dialogue and engagement. Key stakeholders and groups with whom the SPMs interact include:

- Security Council members,
- Member States,
- Parties to the conflict,
- Geopolitical actors,
- Regional and international organizations,
- Think-tanks, academics and policy advocates, and
- Civil society groups, including women's and youth organizations.

### III. Scope and Methodology

11. The evaluation covered the period from 2021 to 2024 across all seven cluster 1 SPMs identified in paragraph 1 above.

12. The evaluation utilized a mixed-method approach that integrated the following data sources:

<b>Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•67 interviews (55 per cent women), with 24 staff and 43 stakeholder across the 7 missions, including heads of entities, DPPA staff and external stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Four surveys to: i)Substantive staff (N=96, 76 per cent response rate); ii) stakeholders (N=301,40 per cent reponse rate); iii) Technical Committee co-chairs and members (N=34,68 per cent response rate); and iv) Civil Society Support Room participants (N=580, 18 per cent response rate).</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Observations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meeting of the Women's Advisory Board meeting for OSESG-Syria in July 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland</li> <li>• Meetings of the Technical Committees on Environment and Culture and field visits to the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters' Joint Contact Room and to cultural heritage sites with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus in October 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>Document Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•1,178 code cables, background notes, talking points, situation reports, and other analysis outputs were reviewed as part of the desk analysis for a comprehensive context on the political situation and operational reality for the missions.</li> <li>•102 Mandate documents, including Resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly</li> <li>•40 Reports of the Secretary-General</li> <li>•Five budget documents</li> <li>•50 project documents</li> <li>•88 Security Council meeting records documents and votes were reviewed.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Data Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assessment of UMOJA travel data for all 7 missions between 2021-2024</li> <li>•Armed Conflict Location &amp; Event Data (ACLED)</li> </ul>
<b>Case Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•OSASG-Cyprus: Case study on mission's facilitation of the Technical Committees as a trust building vehicle.</li> <li>•OSE-Syria: Case study on mission's approaches to broaden inclusion through the Civil Society Support Room and the Women's Advisory Board.</li> </ul>

## IV. Evaluation Results

### A. While cluster I SPMs have leveraged their comparative advantages when undertaking their good offices' function, their strategic planning to respond to changing operational contexts was not always adequate

*Cluster I SPMs leveraged their legitimacy, credibility, and impartiality in their use of a broad range of modalities*

13. The SPMs employed a range of modalities to convene parties and facilitate dialogue, and in doing so they leveraged their perceived comparative advantages of legitimacy, credibility, and the impartiality of their mandate. These modalities included bilateral and multilateral meetings with parties to the conflict, and a range of formal mechanisms to facilitate engagement between the parties (such as the Geneva International Discussions), the diplomatic community (such as the Humanitarian and Ceasefire Task Forces of the International Syria Support Group), military (such as OSESG-Yemen's military coordination committee with delegations from the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, established during the truce in 2022 and maintained for de-escalation), and civil society (such as the OSE-Syria's Civil Society Support Room and Women's Advisory Board). Other modalities included shuttle diplomacy, the use of strategic partnerships, and projects funded through voluntary contributions, as summarized in Table 4 below.

*Table 4: SPMs used diverse modalities to facilitate their engagement with relevant stakeholders*

Stakeholder Type	Modalities	OSASG-Cyprus	OESG-Myanmar	OSE-Syria	OESG-Yemen	PESG-Western Sahara	UNRGID	OESG-1559
Parties to the conflict	Formal mechanisms recognized by the parties to the conflict <sup>5</sup>	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
	Other meetings and consultations with parties to the conflict	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Member States	Formal Diplomatic community engagement mechanisms <sup>6</sup>	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
	Other meetings and consultations with Member States <sup>7</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Engagement with broader constituencies	Engagement mechanisms with broader constituencies <sup>8</sup>	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
	Other meetings and consultations with broader constituencies <sup>9</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Partnerships	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-

<sup>5</sup> For example: The Technical Committees in Cyprus, the Constitutional Committee in Syria, Yemen's Military Coordination Committee, and the Geneva International Discussions.

<sup>6</sup> Formal engagement with the Diplomatic community, e.g., The Humanitarian Task Force and Ceasefire Task Force of OSE-Syria

<sup>7</sup> Includes other informal engagement with the international and diplomatic community.

<sup>8</sup> Formal engagements and mechanisms, for example: The Civil Society Support Room and Women's Advisory Board of OSE-Syria

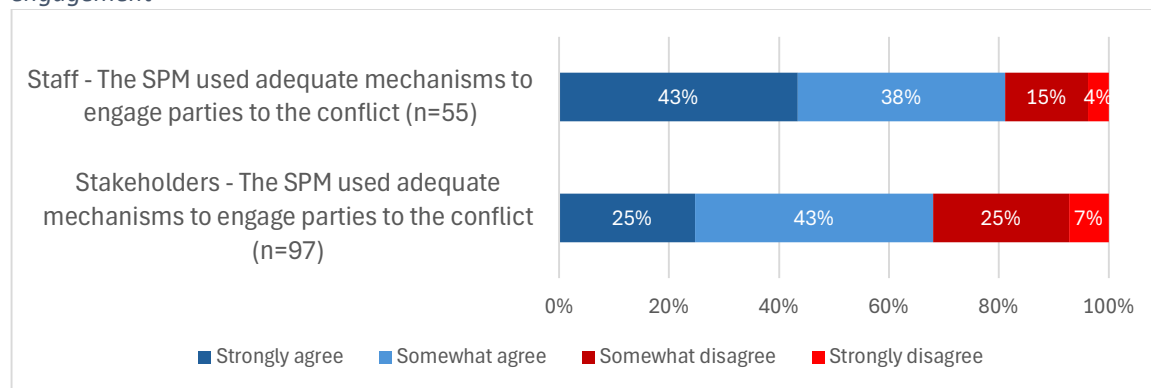
<sup>9</sup> Includes other informal engagement with civil society groups at the local and international level

Collaborators/ Partners	Projects	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-
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Source: Document Review

14. The institutional legitimacy SPMs brought to bear on their work enabled them to access and engage with a wide range of stakeholders with at times divergent views—including parties to the conflict, regional actors, and civil society. All of these while maintaining a perception of impartiality, which was recognized by all concerned. This credibility allowed the SPMs to employ a diverse range of modalities to engage a broad range of stakeholders, even in the absence of formal political negotiations across all seven SPMs.
15. Staff and stakeholders surveyed were generally positive on the adequate use of the SPM modalities of engagement, as shown in Figure 3. This reflected their general confidence in the approaches used by Cluster 1 SPMs. Furthermore, the modalities employed by SPMs were largely seen as relevant in fostering engagement and supporting their mandates. However, the difference in perception between staff and stakeholders noted in Figure 3 does suggest room for further refinement to enhance external engagement.

Figure 3: Staff and stakeholders surveyed were mostly positive on the adequacy of modalities of engagement

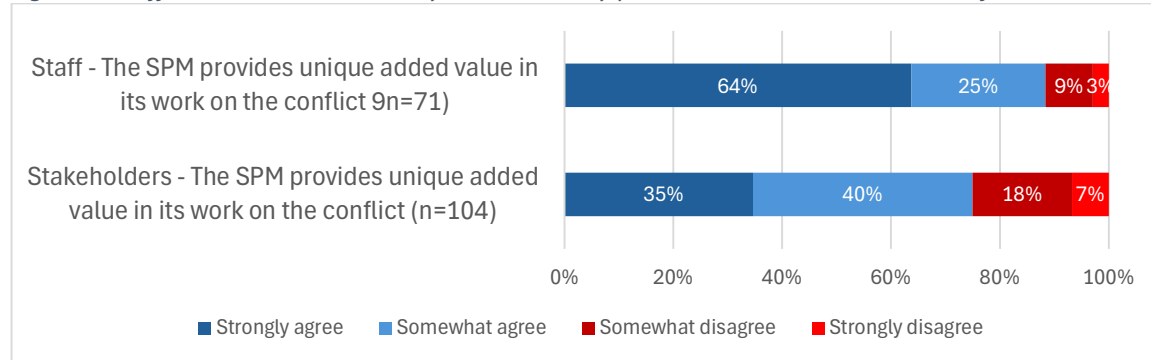


Source: OIOS Surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

16. Moreover, the SPMs were recognized by stakeholders and staff surveyed as having a comparative advantage in the unique role they played in the conflicts they addressed, as shown in Figure 4. Their ability to engage and build relationships of trust with a wide range of stakeholders set them apart from other stakeholders engaged in resolving the conflicts. The unique role was exemplified by OSASG-Cyprus, which was recognized as the only interlocutor working on the Cyprus peace process that was able to engage the two parties on an equal basis. The unique convening role of the SPMs also enabled them to bring together parties to the conflict and geopolitical actors to facilitate discussions and joint solutions. In Yemen, for example, the OSESG-Yemen played a critical role as a liaison between parties and the international community, and on the negotiation on conflict related detainees. During the evaluation period, there were five meetings of the Supervisory Committee for the Stockholm Agreement on the Release of Detainees, which brings together the conflict parties, under the co-chair of OSESGY and ICRC.<sup>10</sup> These negotiations resulted in the release of over 1,200 detainees. Furthermore, the expertise of the mission and its institutional memory strengthened their capacity to navigate complex political landscapes effectively.

<sup>10</sup> These meetings facilitate and mediate agreements on lists of detainees to be released (led by OSESGY), including the technical and logistical details of such releases (led by ICRC).

Figure 4: Staff and stakeholders surveyed were mostly positive about the added value of SPMs

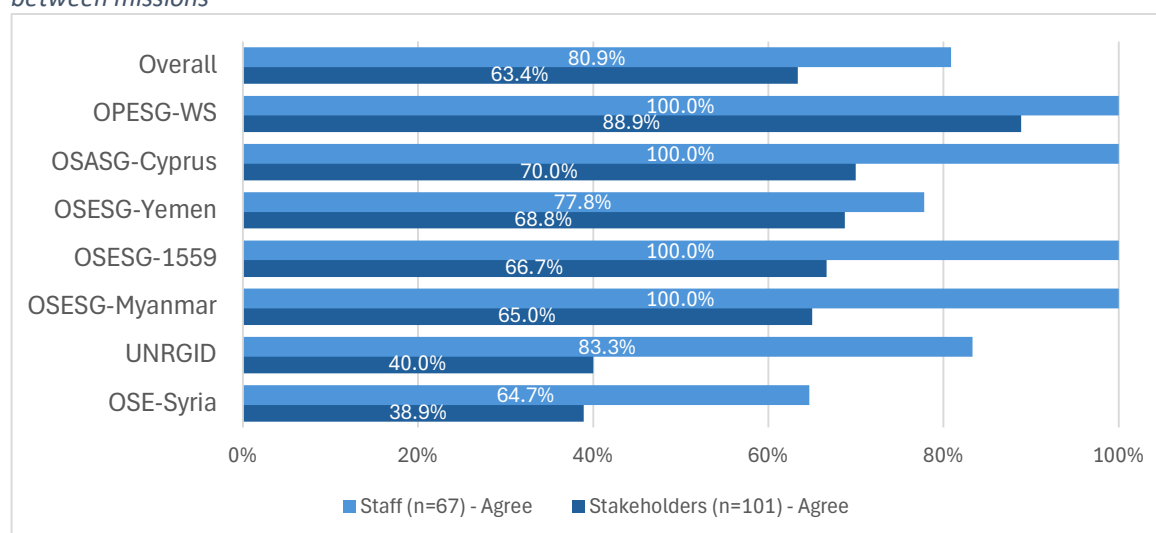


Source: OIOS Surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

*The lack of clear strategic direction at times hampered the ability of the SPMs to respond to shifts in the operating environment*

17. Cluster 1 SPMs have contended with evolving mandates and shifting operating environments, including changing conflict dynamics. The mandates of the SPMs have evolved over the years, subtly reflecting changes in the conflict and the operating environment. Across all missions, engagement with parties to the conflicts and reporting on their activities have remained as their core function. Most SPMs were also called to collaborate with geopolitical and diplomatic actors, as well as other United Nations entities in the pursuit of a political solution to the conflicts they were addressing.
18. Myanmar is illustrative of the nature of evolving operating context of the SPMs. The initial mandate of the SPM, coming from the General Assembly was to work with the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh for the return of Rohingya refugees. Following the military takeover in 2021, the first Security Council resolution on the office specifically requested close coordination with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Special Envoy to engage intensively with all relevant parties and seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar. The activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Myanmar had since shifted to respond to this change in mandate and address the political dynamics of the conflict.
19. Overall, staff and stakeholders generally agreed that the SPMs had effectively adapted to address changes in the operating context, as shown in Figure 5, with stakeholders holding more critical views. In particular, the majority of stakeholders of OSE-Syria and UNRGID surveyed thought the missions were not sufficiently adaptive to evolving contexts.

Figure 5: Staff and stakeholder views on adaptation of SPMs to changes in the operating context varied between missions



Source: OIOS Staff and Stakeholder Surveys

20. In the context of these evolving operating contexts and despite requirements, most SPMs lacked strategic planning documents that articulated how they intended to implement their mandates. While the missions were generating consistent and insightful analysis, linkages between the knowledge generated from these analyses and the possible shift in SPM strategic direction were not apparent. This led to confusion among some staff about how they sought to implement their mandates. Notable proportions of staff in OSE-Syria (35 per cent), OSESG-Yemen (23 per cent), and OSESG-Myanmar (17 per cent) disagreed that the strategy to achieve the mandate in their respective SPMs was clear according to the staff survey. The DPPA requirements<sup>11</sup> that missions develop a Mission Concept – an important management tool to present a vision for mandate delivery - and revise it following a change in the mandate or the mission’s operating environment were not being implemented by most of the SPMs in the Cluster. These requirements had last been published in 2014 and had not been updated since the implementation of United Nations Management Reforms starting in 2017. While most missions had a senior manager’s compact, other strategic planning tools, including the Mission Concept, had not been leveraged in most SPMs as can be seen in Table 5 below. This further illustrated the significant differences in size and capacities between the missions.

Table 5: Reported planning and strategic tools used by SPMs

Type	OSASG-Cyprus	PESG-Western Sahara	OSESG-1559	UNRGID	OSE-Syria	OSESG-Yemen	OSESG-Myanmar
Senior manager’s compact	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Plan/Framework	✓					✓	
Mission Concept						✓	
Organizational unit work plans						✓	

Source: OIOS Document Review

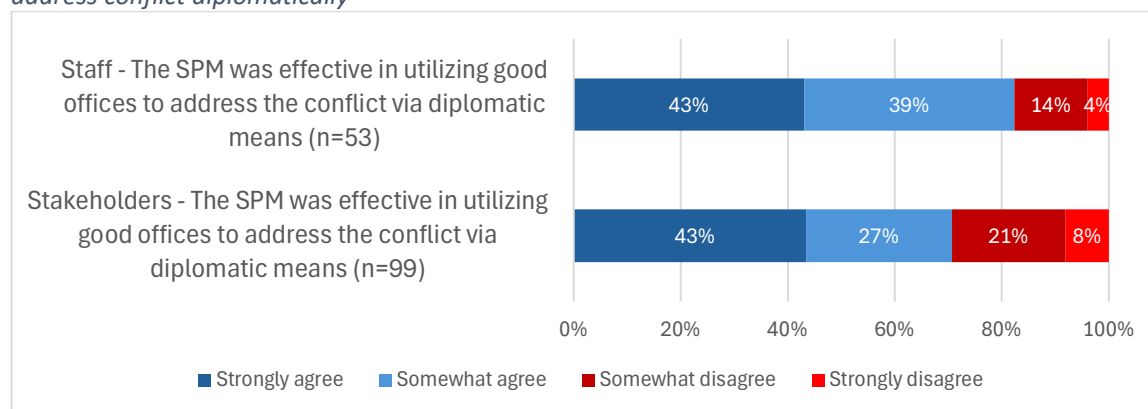
<sup>11</sup> DPKO/DFS and DPA Guidelines, the Mission Concept, Ref. 2014.04

## B. Cluster I SPMs have effectively engaged parties, facilitated dialogue and supported decisions of intergovernmental bodies

*SPMs effectively engaged relevant parties and facilitated dialogue through their good offices work*

21. Overall, SPMs have effectively engaged a range of relevant parties to the conflicts. Survey respondents considered the missions to have been effective in utilizing their good offices function, as shown in Figure 6 below. Interviews with staff and stakeholders, and a review of documents further revealed that this success was context-dependent and relied on the missions' ability to navigate a host of constraints and complex regional dynamics and external influences to overcome deep-rooted political divisions.

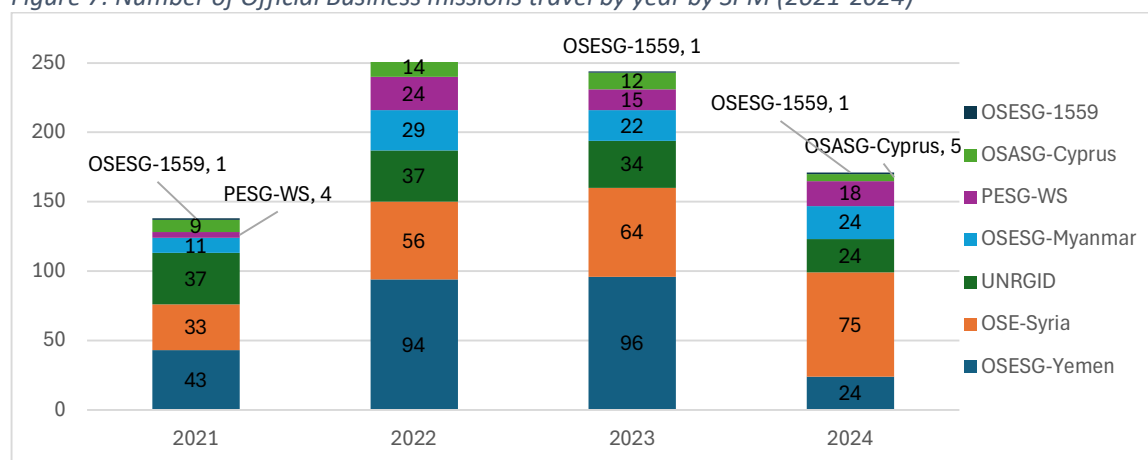
*Figure 6: Staff and stakeholders surveyed were mostly positive on the effectiveness of good offices to address conflict diplomatically*



Source: OIOS Staff and Stakeholder Surveys

22. In particular, SPMs frequently deployed shuttle diplomacy missions as a modality to engage with parties to the conflict. An assessment of UMOJA travel data revealed that between 2021 to 2024, a relatively high volume of travel (809 missions) was undertaken by SPM professional staff and above, as shown in Figure 7.

*Figure 7: Number of Official Business missions travel by year by SPM (2021-2024)*

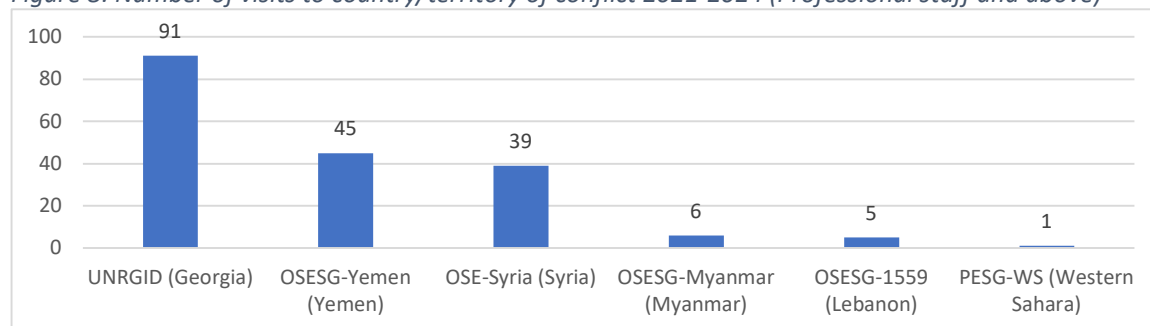


Source: UMOJA Travel Data<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The UMOJA data does not include travel funded by projects, which is the case for some of the SPMs, notably OSESG-Yemen.

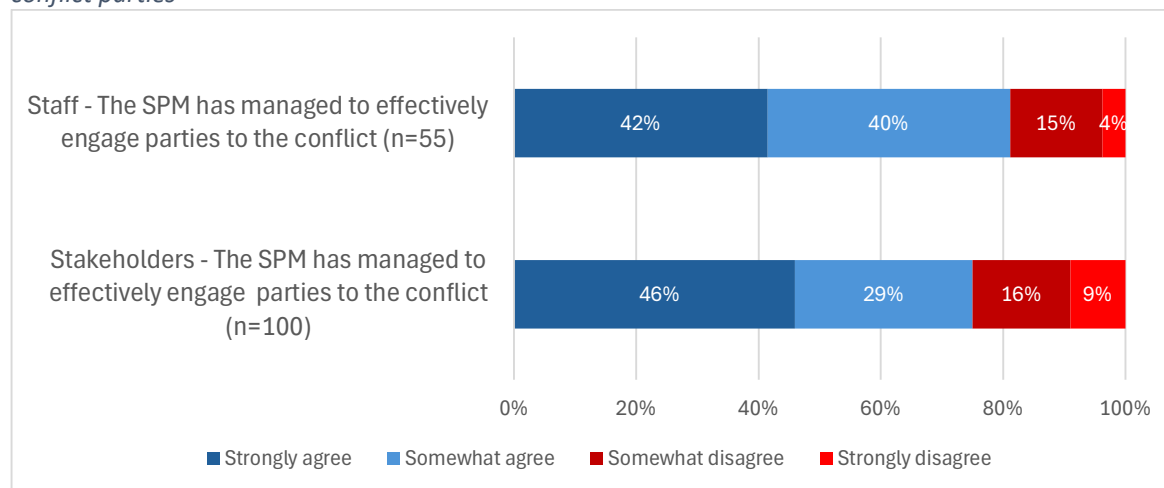
23. As shown in Figure 8, a significant share of these missions covered staff travel to conflict countries, as most SPMs - except for OSASG-Cyprus - were headquartered partially or entirely outside the conflict area. Shuttle diplomacy missions were therefore crucial for maintaining dialogue with parties to the conflicted parties and building trust. Overall, staff and stakeholders were positive about the effectiveness of the engagement of the SPMs with the parties to the conflict, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 8: Number of visits to country/territory of conflict 2021-2024 (Professional staff and above)



Source: UMOJA Travel Data

Figure 9: Staff and stakeholders surveyed were positive on the effectiveness of engagement with conflict parties



Source: OIOS Staff and Stakeholder Surveys

24. In addition to direct engagement to the parties through shuttle diplomacy and presence in the country for some of the missions, SPMs also engaged key geopolitical stakeholders, reflecting the imperative of addressing the geopolitical dimensions of conflicts. Envoys and Representatives thus not only visited the United States for reporting to the Security Council and engaging with key Member States but also frequently conducted regional visits. For example, in OSESG-Yemen, as shown in Figure 10, the Special Envoy visited several key actors, most notably Saudi Arabia 20 times, reflecting its central role in brokering the 2022 truce agreement, its broader influence as a key regional actor, and the fact that some Yemen government officials were based there. Oman followed with 11 visits, alongside other critical stakeholders such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran, all of which play significant roles in regional diplomacy.



Figure 10: The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen visited several regional stakeholders from 2021 to 2024



Source: UMOJA Travel Data<sup>13</sup>

25. As another example, from 2021 to 2024, the Special Envoy for OSESG-Myanmar visited several regional stakeholders, including ASEAN member states. Thailand was visited most frequently as most members of the Special Political Mission are currently based in Bangkok, followed by visits to Indonesia and Malaysia. These visits underscored the importance of the partnership with ASEAN and other regional countries as shown in Figure 11. The Special Envoy also visited Myanmar's neighbouring countries (Bangladesh including Cox's Bazar), India and China, among others. Overall, both staff and stakeholders had positive views of the engagement of the SPMs with geopolitical actors and the broader diplomatic community, although stakeholders were more critical (Figure 12). Furthermore, eleven visits to the USA were recorded during this period, including visits to both the United Nations Headquarters in New York for briefings to the General Assembly and Security Council and other member state engagements, and visits to Washington DC.

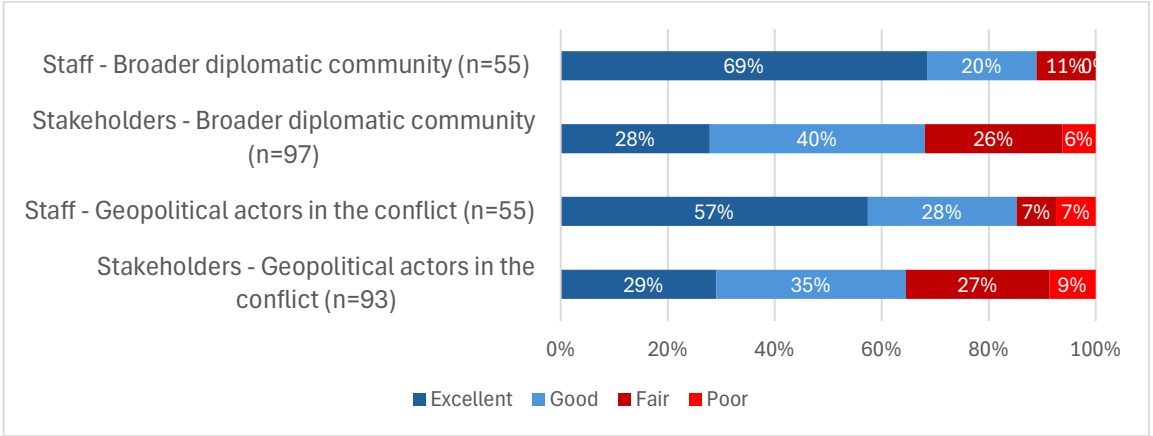
<sup>13</sup> The UMOJA data does not include travel funded by projects, which is the case for some of the SPMs, notably OSESG-Yemen.

Figure 11: The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar visited several regional stakeholders from 2021 to 2024



Source: UMOJA Travel Data

Figure 12: Stakeholders were more critical than staff on SPM engagement with geopolitical actors and the broader diplomatic community



Source: OIOS Staff and Stakeholder Surveys

*The Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus illustrated some good practices that facilitated dialogue and helped to build trust between the parties*

26. The OSASG in Cyprus, the longest-standing Cluster 1 SPM, has played a critical role contributing to trust-building between the Cypriot communities. In 2008, the mission started facilitating the work of Technical Committees established by the leaders of both communities, focusing on issues of common interest to facilitate dialogue between the two sides. The OSASG-Cyprus has since then played a central role in coordinating, facilitating, and supporting the work of the 12 Technical Committees, which involved organizing meetings and seminars, providing technical expertise, servicing and facilitating the discussions and assisting with project implementation. Table 6 provides a summary of some of the key achievements to which the SPM contributed over the past five years.

*Table 6: The OSASG in Cyprus supported the technical committees in various key achievements from 2021 to 2024<sup>14</sup>*

Technical Committee	Key Achievements
Broadcasting and Telecommunication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed and began implementing a project to introduce 5G across the island.<sup>15</sup></li> <li>Continued resolving frequency interference in civil aviation and radio communications.</li> </ul>
Crime and Criminal Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated suspect handovers and crime-related information exchange through the Joint Contact Room.</li> <li>Established a Joint Contact Room branch in the bicomunal village of Pyla/Pile to address criminality.</li> </ul>
Crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reopened the last three crossing points on June 2, 2021, after extensive discussions by the Technical Committee on Health and both sides.</li> <li>Agreed to further expand the Agios Dometios/Metehan crossing point in 2024.</li> </ul>
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed conservation efforts and implemented numerous projects to protect cultural heritage monuments on both sides of the island.</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized several events, including the Connecting Arts project, which brought together over 60 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists, academics, and experts helping to strengthen understanding and appreciation of culture.</li> <li>Launched the Channels to Culture and Cooperation project, featuring a website for cultural exchange on the island.</li> </ul>
Economic and Commercial Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Played a key role in increasing Green Line Regulation trade volume, which reached record levels in 2022.</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched the Imagine project on peace education, reaching over 1,000 students, training 120 teachers, and engaging 36 students in an educational city walk in Nicosia.</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a website as a clearinghouse for scientists to address environmental challenges across the island.</li> <li>Approved a project to clear water sources in the buffer zone.</li> </ul>
Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed on a joint Action Plan to ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in the settlement process, launched with the attendance of both leaders.</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversaw the transfer of vaccines between the two communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Two of the Technical Committees did not achieve significant outcomes over the period and were not included in the outcome summary

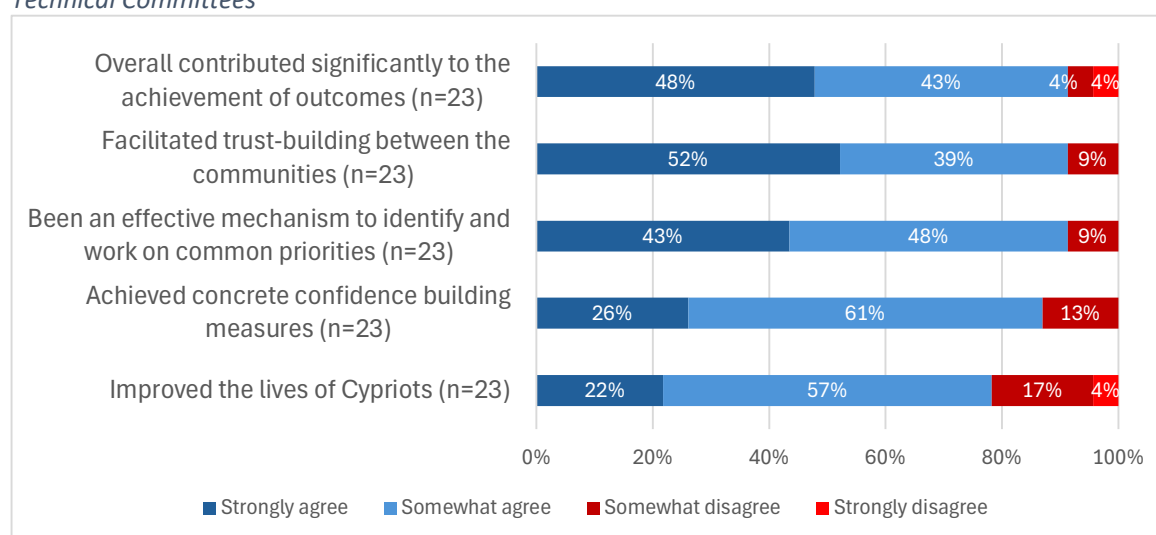
<sup>15</sup> S/2021/1109

- Completed the first phase of a mosquito vector identification and distribution project to mitigate disease transmission and organized training sessions on combating invasive mosquitos on February 29 and April 24.

Source: OIOS Document Review

27. Overall, efforts supported by the mission through the Technical Committees have led to effective confidence-building measures that improved the lives of Cypriots. The facilitation and support provided was deemed effective by both sides and contributed to fostering engagement, mutual understanding, and tangible bi-communal initiatives. The mission facilitated a platform for cooperation where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots worked together on shared concerns. Additionally, Technical Committee members surveyed generally rated the contributions of their respective committees highly, as shown in Figure 13 below. These findings underscored the mission's unique role in bridging divides, building trust and fostering cooperation in Cyprus.

Figure 13: Technical Committee Members were overwhelmingly positive on the contributions of their Technical Committees



Source: OIOS Surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

*SPMs reports and briefings informed and supported the decisions of the intergovernmental bodies on their respective conflicts*

28. Almost all the SPMs implemented their mandates to regularly report to the Security Council and/or General Assembly on their activities and developments relating to the conflict they addressed through Secretary-General reports, as shown in Table 7. In addition to the reporting by the missions through reports of the Secretary-General, Security Council members discussed the conflicts in Cyprus, Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and Western Sahara, Lebanon and the work of the associated SPMs through meetings of the Security Council and Consultations of the whole.

Table 7: Type and frequency of engagement with intergovernmental bodies by SPM (2021-2024)

	OSASG- Cyprus	PESG- Western Sahara	OSESG- 1559	UNRGID	OSE- Syria	OSESG- Yemen	OSESG- Myanmar
Reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council	Biannual	Annual*	Biannual	-	-	-	-
Reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly	-	Annual*	-	Annual*	-	-	Annual*
Briefings to the Security Council	Biannual	Biannual	Biannual	-	44	48	11 <sup>16</sup>
Security Council Meetings and Consultations	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes

\*Reports that cover the activities of the SPM and other entities

Source: OIOS Document Review

29. Security Council feedback on the work of the envoys and their offices was positive. An analysis of briefings and discussions by the Security Council for Yemen and Syria, for example, revealed that Member States consistently expressed support for the Special Envoy for Yemen, thanking him for his informative briefings, recognizing his dedication, and acknowledging his commitment to an inclusive approach and to working with Yemeni and regional stakeholders. Many Security Council members also expressed strong support and appreciation for the efforts of the Special Envoy for Syria to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict, and for his insightful briefings on the situation. Understandably, members also expressed concern about the lack of significant process of the political track, namely regarding the Constitutional Committee. The Personal Envoy for Western Sahara briefed the Council twice a year, and discussions of the Council revealed that many members welcomed the appointment of the Personal Envoy in 2021 and continued to express strong support for his efforts to advance the political process.
30. Overall, this frequent reporting and engagement by the SPMs supported the related Intergovernmental deliberations and informed Member State decision-making on the respective conflicts. This took the form of numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as shown in Table 8.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to this, the ASG for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific of DPPA-DPO briefed the Security Council 7 times in open, private, consultations/AOB formats

*Table 8: Resolutions informed by reports to and engagement of the SPMs with the General Assembly and Security Council (2021-2024)*

SPM	Number of Resolutions
<b>Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus</b>	Six resolutions of the Security Council
<b>Personal envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara</b>	Four resolutions of the Security Council and four resolutions of the General Assembly
<b>Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions</b>	Four resolutions of the General Assembly
<b>Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria</b>	Four resolutions of the General Assembly
<b>Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen</b>	Four resolutions of the Security Council
<b>Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar</b>	One resolution of the Security Council and four resolutions of the General Assembly

*Source: OIOS Document Review*

## C. Nonetheless, the contributions of cluster I SPMs to reducing the risk of violence were more mixed

*SPM efforts to mitigate the risk of escalation, continuation or recurrence of violent conflict had yielded mixed results*

31. In comparison to the findings discussed in Result B above, SPM contributions to mitigating the risk of violent conflict have been less consistent. The Yemen truce brokered by OSESG-Yemen was one of the few examples of significant achievements in this regard. Following military escalation in 2021, the efforts of the mission had led to the conclusion of a two-month truce between the principal parties to the conflict in 2022. The agreement included a temporary cessation of offensive military operations, as well as the implementation of economic confidence building measures by both parties. Following negotiations by the mission with the parties, the truce was subsequently extended twice. While it formally expired in October 2022, its provisions continued de-facto and led to an immediate reduction of 60 per cent in the civilian casualty rate compared to the previous six months. Furthermore, several of the confidence-building measures, namely the entry of fuel ships in the ports of Hodeida, the operation of commercial flights to and from Sana'a airport, and the establishment of the Military Coordination Committee, continued to be implemented beyond the lifespan of the truce. The truce also facilitated dialogue between the Government of Yemen, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah), and geopolitical actors such as Saudi Arabia, as well as the Sultanate of Oman, which played a key role in sustaining negotiations and supporting de-escalation efforts.
32. In some cases, SPMs involvement had reasonably contributed to maintaining the status quo and preventing the recurrence or risk of violence. This was seen in Cyprus, where the mission played a critical role to strengthen the interactions between the two sides. The mission's facilitation of trilateral meetings between the Greek Cypriot Negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot Special Representative, enabled them to serve as key platforms for confidence-building measures, for progress on Technical Committee initiatives, and discussion on other key issues to both communities. From 2021 to 2024, the mission addressed concerns such as the disruptions of regular trilateral meetings following an incident near the bicomunal village of Pyla/Pile within the United

Nations buffer zone in August 2023.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, UNRGID also played a critical role in facilitating interactions between the participants of the Geneva International Discussions. While the platform had not led to tangible outcomes and faced numerous challenges, it was nevertheless the only platform that brought together all parties to discuss security and humanitarian issues related to the 2008 conflict in Georgia, thus contributing to preventing the recurrence of violence. Regarding the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meetings, notwithstanding the Mission's continuous efforts, the Mechanism remained suspended due to disagreements among participants over some procedures

33. Notably the PESG-Western Sahara and OSE-Syria needed to address entrenched positions and regional tensions to advance political processes. In Western Sahara, efforts to revive the roundtable format were unsuccessful, as differing perspectives on its effectiveness prevented progress. Recognizing these obstacles, the Personal Envoy shifted towards bilateral engagements, holding informal consultations in New York in March 2023 with key stakeholders. Throughout 2023 and 2024, the Personal Envoy continued shuttle diplomacy, meeting with relevant actors to maintain dialogue. However, despite the positive efforts of the Personal Envoy in keeping communication open and continuing engagement, the political process remained stalled, with conflicting positions on the path forward and regional tensions further complicating negotiations. In Syria, the mission had focused on restarting the Constitutional Committee, which had been suspended since 2022 due to political deadlock.<sup>18</sup> These efforts were ultimately unsuccessful and upended by a change in authorities unrelated to the political process in place at the time. Since the transition, the Special Envoy for Syria has dedicated significant efforts to building trust and establishing an effective working relationship with the new authorities.
34. Overall, the conflict situation worsened between 2021 and 2024 in Myanmar and Lebanon. During this time, the OSESG-Myanmar saw the appointment of three Special Envoys, each engaging with key stakeholders to address the political crisis, humanitarian needs, and regional diplomacy. Despite their efforts, tangible progress toward a peaceful resolution was limited, with high levels of violence, and deteriorating security, humanitarian, and human rights conditions underscoring constraints in achieving a breakthrough.<sup>19</sup> In Lebanon, the stalemate of the domestic political situation since 2021 followed by the grave deterioration of the situation in October 2023 due to regional conflict and heightened hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah from September 2024, also offered limited space for progress. In that context, OSESG-1559 had been without an Envoy since 2016 and was effectively restricted to reporting on the situation on the ground, with little political engagement to address the outstanding provisions of the Security Council Resolution 1559.<sup>20</sup> With a critical P4 position vacant since February 2023, the mission exclusively relied on the DPPA-DPO Middle East Division Lebanon team to prepare semi-annual reports, conduct analysis, and support the engagements of the USG of DPPA with relevant stakeholders. This lack of capacity had hindered the SPM's ability to engage stakeholders meaningfully and identify opportunities for progress on the resolution.

*SPMs faced common constraints in mitigating the risk of violent conflict despite the different contexts and settings in which they operated*

35. The SPMs operated in complex conflict settings, and critical conditions were not always in place for effective progress on the conflicts they addressed. Common constraints faced by the SPMs included

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<sup>17</sup> S/2024/13

<sup>18</sup> S/2023/464

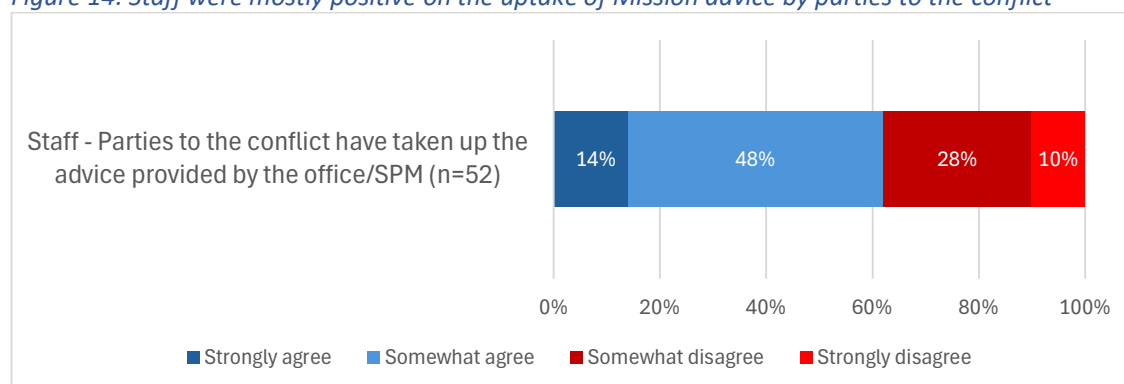
<sup>19</sup> A/79/275 (2024)

<sup>20</sup> Namely to to disband and disarm Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extend control of the Government of Lebanon over all its territory, and strict respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the authority of the Government of Lebanon



entrenched positions and frequently lack of consent by the parties to take up advice from SPMs, as shown in Figure 14. The missions thus often had little leverage beyond the soft power and legitimacy accorded by the mandates to influence the parties.

*Figure 14: Staff were mostly positive on the uptake of Mission advice by parties to the conflict*



Source: OIOS survey of staff

36. A lack of international consensus on many of the conflicts, geopolitical interference and wider regional developments further complicated SPM efforts to mitigate the risk of escalation, continuation or recurrence of violent conflict. Geopolitical powers increasingly became involved in the conflicts directly or through proxies, and there was a lack of consensus by Security Council members on some of the conflicts. An analysis of voting records over the period indicated that of the five SPMs covered, only the resolutions on Cyprus were consistently passed unanimously between 2021 and 2024 in the Security Council. Additionally, geopolitical developments such as the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza had profound impacts on many of the conflicts addressed by the SPMs by diverting international attention. For example, the war in Ukraine had adversely impacted participation in the Geneva international Discussions (only one round was held in 2022, with three rounds held annually since 2023) as well as the convening of the Constitutional Committee of OSE-Syria. Similarly, the war in Gaza had far reaching impacts on conflicts in the region, including Yemen, which saw increased levels of violence and the launching of attacks against merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea by the Houthis. Lebanon was ensnared in the conflict due to the posture and actions of militias there, which Resolution 1559 aimed to address. Nowhere was the impact more visible than in Syria, which saw a change of authorities as a result of events in Gaza and Ukraine.
37. Many SPM staff also cited resources as a constraint in their work; limited financial and human resources were frequently described as preventing offices and SPMs from fully executing their mandates in interviews and the staff survey.<sup>21</sup> Staff surveyed most frequently mentioned the need for greater financial support as their recommendation for improving the delivery of their respective mandates. The second most prominent recommendation concerned needing more mission personnel, as well as improvements to their office work environment.

<sup>21</sup> Some SPMs noted that building trust among parties on education, communication and infrastructure sectors that have been effective require programme resources for technical expertise for related initiatives.



## D. Despite some good examples, most SPMs were challenged to consistently enhance inclusivity in their work

*Despite growing recognition of the importance of inclusive processes, most of the SPMs operationalized this element of their mandates in an ad hoc manner*

38. Resolutions of normative bodies on the conflicts the SPMs addressed, increasingly called for ensuring the meaningful participation of underrepresented groups, reflecting the importance of involving broader constituencies in their work. This is in recognition of the importance of broader social buy-in in peace processes and sustaining peace agreements in the long term. As indicated in Table 9, these calls had largely targeted engagement with civil society, women and youth. Secretary-General reports and political analysis highlighted SPM efforts towards inclusion in political processes, reflecting the commitment of the entities and the Secretary-General to engage with underrepresented constituencies. In Western Sahara, for example, the Personal Envoy had postponed a planned visit to the territory in 2022 following pushback on his plans to meet with civil society and women's representatives.<sup>22</sup> The visit went ahead the following year, and the Personal Envoy was able to engage with civil society actors.

*Table 9: Normative bodies have called for the meaningful participation of more underrepresented groups over time*

	OSASG-Cyprus (Est.1964)	PESG-Western Sahara (Est.1997)	OESG-1559 (Est.2004)	UNRGID (Est.2010)	OSE-Syria (Est.2012)	OESG-Yemen (Est.2012)	OESG-Myanmar (Est.2018)
<b>Civil Society</b>	2007	-	-	-	-	-	2022
<b>Women</b>	2011	2019	-	-	2015	2011	2022
<b>Youth</b>	2018	2019	-	-	-	2011	2022

Source: OIOS Document Review

39. In addition to responding to the mandates to engage underrepresented groups, the SPMs had leveraged their unique positions to advocate for the inclusion of broader constituencies. The reports of the Secretary-General and Security Council resolutions have also served as a pulpit to encourage others to recognize the importance of including constituencies beyond the elite actors in processes, despite the resistance of these actors themselves. Across the SPMs, reports of the Secretary-General have consistently urged political actors to involve underrepresented groups in peace processes, including women, minorities, young people and persons with disabilities, as a best practice.

40. However, few SPMs had systematic approaches to inclusion. Outside of OSE-Syria's Track 2 inclusion mechanisms and the OESG-Yemen, which had developed an inclusion strategy and a gender strategy, the SPMs were challenged to consistently and systematically enhance inclusivity in their work. Some missions like OESG-Yemen, OSASG-Cyprus and OESG-Myanmar had targeted inclusion elements and capacity development at the project level and through voluntary contributions, as illustrated in Figure 15, but this was not always sustainable or systematic.

<sup>22</sup> S/2022/733

Figure 15: OSESG-Myanmar and OSASG-Cyprus had targeted inclusion in their projects

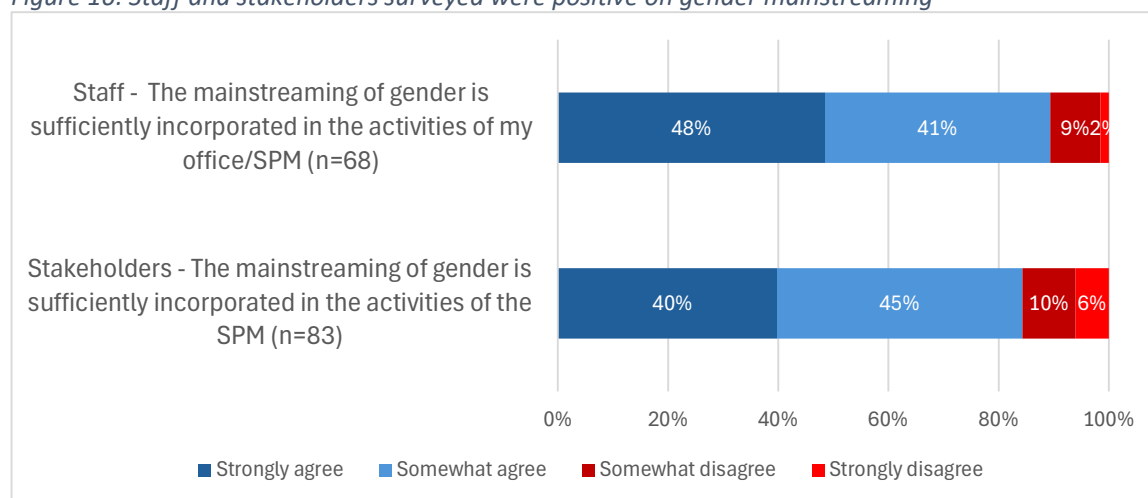
OSESG-MYANMAR	OSASG-CYPRUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023: the SPM engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and civil society and in November 2023 brought some representatives together for a dialogue session, including on women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security.</li> <li>• 2024: the SPM supported research on youth perspectives and mapping youth civil society organizations, presenting recommendations for the UN Country Team's work in support of youth. The SPM supported 12 women leaders to represent Myanmar women's organisations and meet with Security Council members and amplify women's perspectives on the situation in Myanmar during the General Assembly High-Level week.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2023, with Multi Year Appeal funding, efforts to promote and strengthen women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the Cyprus peace talks included a gender mainstreaming, capacity assessment, mapping of and outreach to civil society organizations (CSOs), including women's organizations and women-led initiatives, research on models and platforms for standing CSO engagement, roundtables and a photo exhibition highlighting women's contributions to the negotiations.</p>

Source: OIOS Document Review

*The SPMs have effectively included women in their efforts, but were perceived to be less effective in doing the same for other groups*

41. In line with the above efforts, Cluster I SPMs have consistently and effectively mainstreamed gender. Perceptions on the efforts of the SPMs to mainstream gender were positive, with both staff and stakeholders overwhelmingly indicating that activities of the SPM sufficiently incorporated gender mainstreaming, as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Staff and stakeholders surveyed were positive on gender mainstreaming

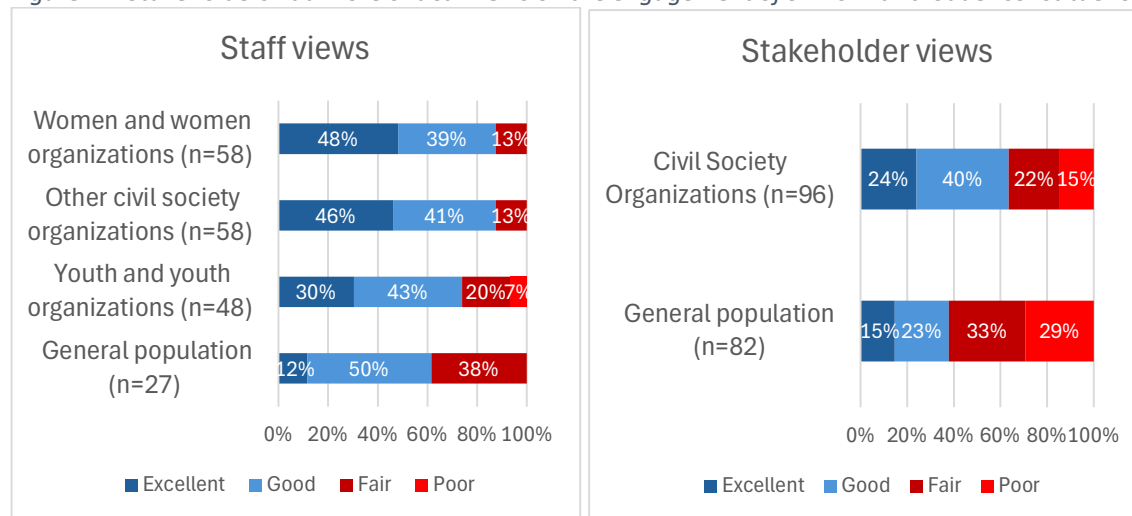


Source: OIOS surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

42. Despite the positive perceptions on gender, survey data pointed to room for improvement in enhancing inclusion for other groups. In particular, survey findings indicated that engagement with

the general population had the poorest rating from both staff and stakeholders, as seen in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Stakeholders had more critical views on the engagement of SPMs with broader constituencies

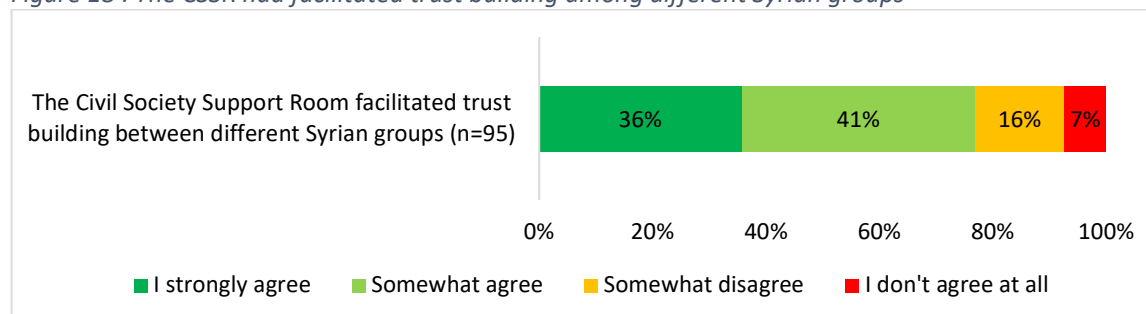


Source: OIOS surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

*In Syria, the Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) and Women's Advisory Board (WAB) illustrated both the successes and constraints of broadening inclusion beyond the parties to the conflict*

43. In response to a mandate<sup>23</sup> for an inclusive political process to shape Syria's future, OSE-Syria created two innovative mechanisms—the CSSR and the WAB— in 2016. These mechanisms were created with distinct but complementary purposes - the CSSR to serve as a broad platform for civil society inclusion and dialogue, and the WAB to provide focused gender-specific advice to the Special Envoy. Both mechanisms have evolved to become vital spaces for dialogue and collaboration (Figure 18) and have been lauded for their success in fostering dialogue and building trust among Syrian stakeholders as well as promoting inclusive collaboration where individuals from varied religious, political, ethnic, and regional backgrounds can engage constructively. Furthermore, the CSSR and WAB served as essential channels for gathering on-the-ground insights from across Syria's diverse regions, thus providing OSE-Syria with a comprehensive understanding of developments. The CSSR and WAB were also critical mechanisms for bridging the gap between Syrian civil society and the international community by providing unprecedented opportunities for Syrian civil society to engage with global actors and contribute perspectives that were previously inaccessible to international policy makers.

Figure 18 : The CSSR had facilitated trust building among different Syrian groups



Source: Survey of CSSR participants

<sup>23</sup> S/RES/2254 (2015)

44. Despite these positive assessments the ability of the CSSR and WAB to contribute to the resolution of the conflict was somewhat constrained, as illustrated in survey responses to the CSSR shown in Figure 19. Members from both mechanisms interviewed expressed concerns about their limited influence and declining momentum in light of the stalled political process prior to the events of December 2024. Some highlighted the lack of tangible outcomes, while others expressed the view that the process had become stagnant, as illustrated by the quotes of two participants in Box 1.

#### Box 1

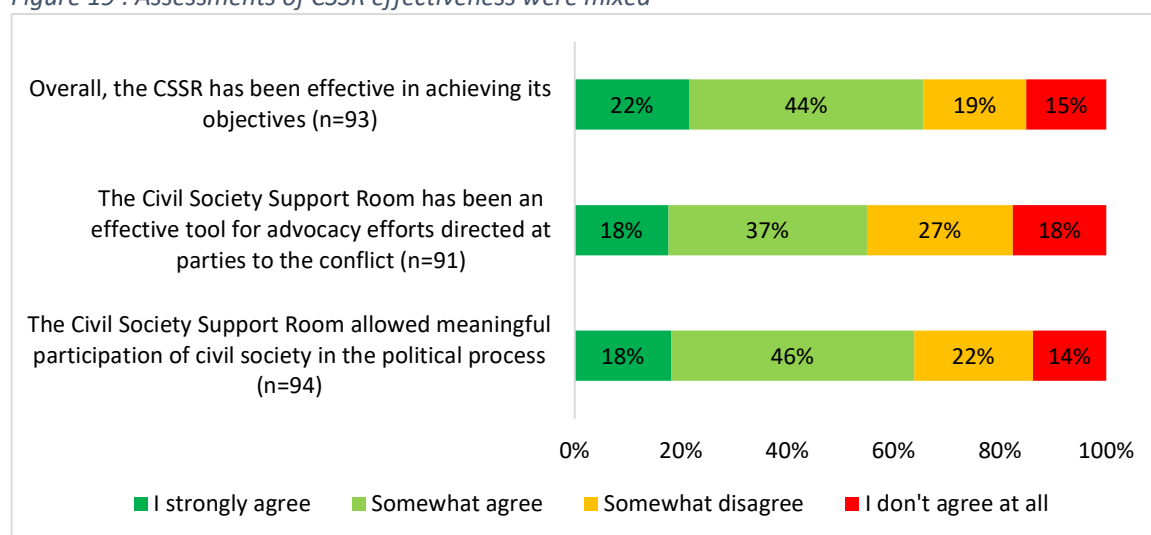
*"In the last 2 years I feel like we are in a dark tunnel with no solution, even the Constitutional Committee stopped meeting".*

**CSSR Participant**

*"At the level of the participant, there is outcome, meaningful dialogue, but everything ends there. Rarely does something from the discussions go outside".*

**CSSR Participant**

Figure 19 : Assessments of CSSR effectiveness were mixed



Source: Survey of CSSR participants

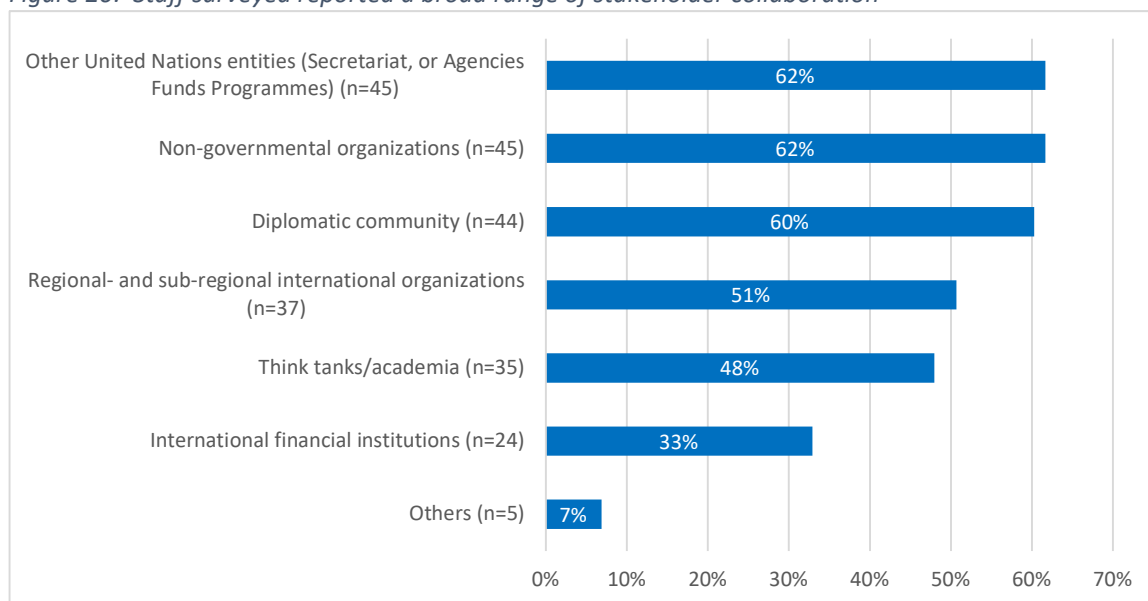
## E. The SPMs effectively leveraged strategic partnerships with a range of United Nations and external stakeholders to deliver on their mandates

*SPMs collaborated well with United Nations system entities to deliver on their mandates, although opportunities to share best practices and leverage regional expertise were perceived not to be fully exploited between missions*

45. Regarding stakeholder collaboration, SPMs collaborated most frequently with United Nations entities, as shown in Figure 20. There were several examples of effective partnerships between the SPM and United Nations entities. For instance, OSE-Syria collaborated with UN Women to support the Women's Advisory Board, strengthening women's participation in the political process and ensuring gender perspectives were integrated into peace efforts. Similarly, OSESG-Yemen worked closely with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), among others, to advance peacebuilding initiatives, improve humanitarian access, engage with Track-II organizations and support infrastructure rehabilitation in conflict-affected areas. OSASG-Cyprus also collaborated with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) across various areas, with the latter supporting the facilitation of Technical

Committees on Crisis Management, Crime and Criminal Matters, and Gender Equality, for example. Throughout the reporting period, they jointly facilitated initiatives related to environmental peacebuilding in the buffer zone, the United Nations Youth Champions for Environment and Peace program and working groups on environmental peacebuilding and innovation/entrepreneurship. These partnerships enhanced the missions' capacity to deliver on their mandates by leveraging the expertise and operational reach of United Nations agencies.

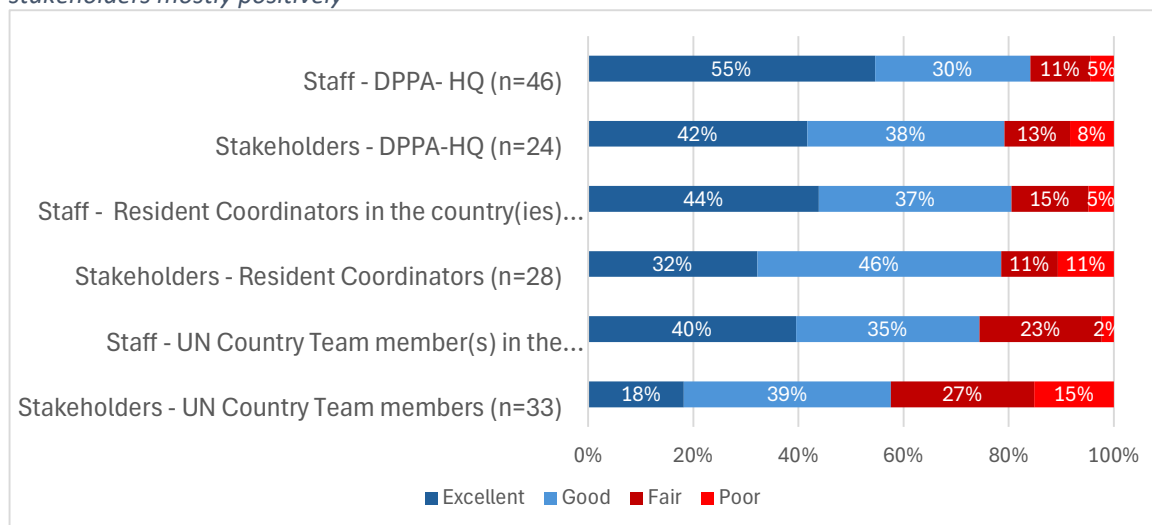
Figure 20: Staff surveyed reported a broad range of stakeholder collaboration



Source: OIOS survey of staff

46. The collaboration with key United Nations Secretariat entities was generally viewed positively. Most staff and stakeholder survey respondents rated it positively, as shown in Figure 21.

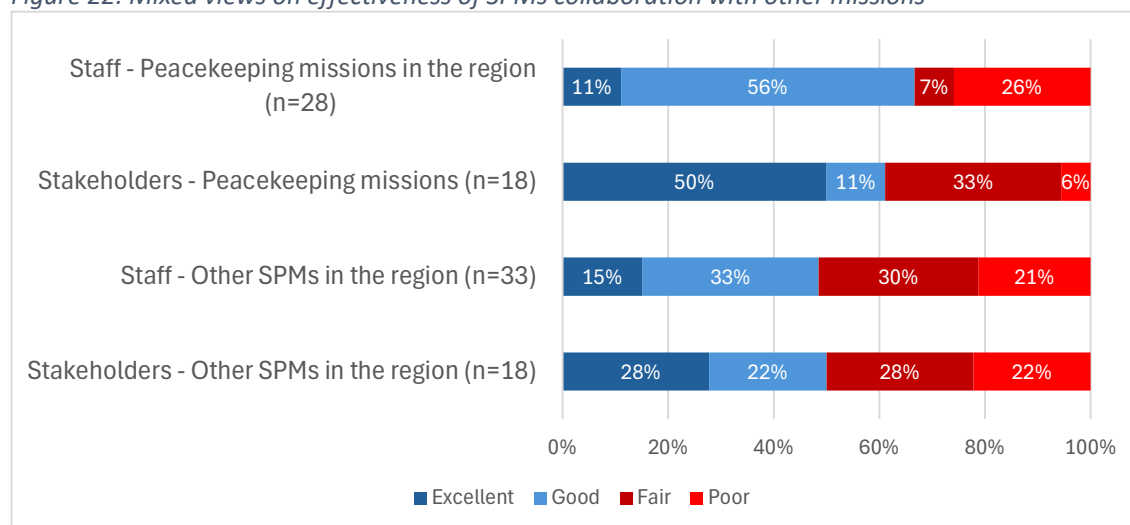
Figure 21: Staff and stakeholder viewed their collaboration with key United Nations Secretariat stakeholders mostly positively



Source: OIOS surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

47. Despite these positive assessments of collaboration with other United Nations entities, and various entry points for information sharing between missions<sup>24</sup>, the collaboration between the missions themselves was not viewed as positively, as shown in Figure 22. These results point to an important gap in internal collaboration, particularly given the increasingly important role regional dynamics play in local and national conflicts.

Figure 22: Mixed views on effectiveness of SPMs collaboration with other missions



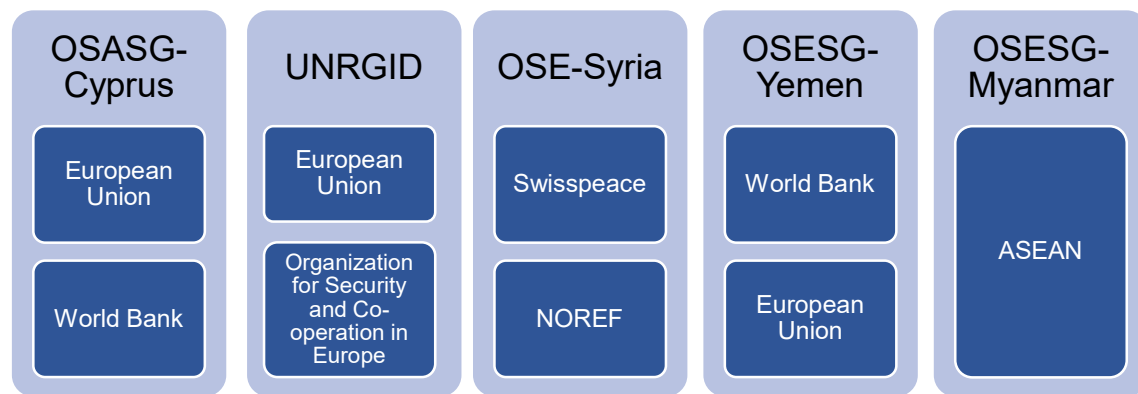
Source: OIOS surveys of Staff and Stakeholders

*Partnerships and collaboration with non-United Nations external stakeholders further expanded the scope and reach of SPMs efforts*

48. The SPMs have effectively leveraged strategic partnerships with non-United Nations external stakeholders in support of the delivery of their mandates. The key organizations with whom the SPMs partnered are shown in Figure 23. As an example of an effective partnership, UNRGID maintained a unique tripartite relationship with the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions, enhancing coordination and dialogue on regional security issues. Similarly, OSESG-Myanmar collaborated closely with ASEAN, particularly on its Five-Point Consensus for Myanmar, recognizing its critical role in promoting regional stability and facilitating diplomatic engagement with respect to the conflict in Myanmar. In Yemen and Cyprus, the missions had partnered with the World Bank on various research projects, further strengthening their analytical capacity and evidence-based policymaking. Both missions worked closely with the EU as well, which supported a funding facility for the Technical Committees in Cyprus, and Track-II engagement mechanisms in Yemen, which OSESG-Yemen participated in. In Syria, the collaboration and coordination between OSE-Syria and its key implementing partners, Swisspeace and the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF), emerged as a critical element of the success of the CSSR. Swisspeace, and NOREF before its exit in 2022, provided administrative and operational support that allowed the CSSR to operate more efficiently, maximizing resources and enhancing responsiveness. Overall, these partnerships with external stakeholders allowed SPMs to extend their influence, leverage specialized expertise, and foster broader international cooperation in support of peace and conflict resolution efforts.

<sup>24</sup> These include but are not limited to networks of Best Practice Focal Points, and Mission Planners, managed by DPPA, Virtual Information Talks organized by DPPA, and frequent meetings of Chiefs of Staff across SPMs and PKOs. OSESG-Yemen also reported organizing a retreat of for Middle East Representatives and Envoys of the UN Secretary-General in June of 2023.

Figure 23: Examples of key external partnerships of Cluster I SPMs



Source: OIOS Document Review

## V. Conclusion

49. In the last four years, the global peace and security environment has continued to deteriorate, with conflicts increasing in both number and intensity. Amid an uncertain transition to a new world order characterized by geopolitical competition and fragmented global and regional power dynamics, as well as shrinking international funding, the good offices and preventive diplomacy work of the SPMs remains crucial in mitigating the escalation of conflict and violence in these missions. The Secretary-General has underscored the importance of this work and has called for increasing the use of good offices and the role of the envoys in his “New Agenda for Peace”<sup>25</sup>, committing to the deployment of his “good offices to help Member States manage deepening divisions in global politics and prevent the outbreak of conflict.” More recently, the Pact for the Future adopted by Member States calls for the active use of good offices of the Secretary-General to ensure that the United Nations is adequately equipped to lead and support its mediation and preventive diplomacy work.<sup>26</sup>
50. In this context, cluster 1 SPMs have been called to undertake their work in complex and volatile environments. They have made concrete contributions to facilitating agreements, strengthening confidence and advancing political process and solutions; nevertheless, the complexity of their mandates, the volatility of their conflicts and limited capacities and resources have impeded further progress. The SPMs have also not fully leveraged learning from each other in facing common constraints and roadblocks. Addressing these constraints and becoming more adaptive to the changing environments within which they work will contribute to their even greater impact in contributing to inclusive political solutions.

## VI. Recommendations

51. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS makes the following three important recommendations, all of which have been accepted by DPPA and the SPMs:

### Recommendation 1 (Result A)

52. **DPPA, in consultation with cluster I SPMs, should update its guidance to cluster I SPMs to establish minimum planning requirements.** This should be built upon the existing 2014 Mission Concept Guidelines and ensure that all cluster I SPMs have clear and adaptable mandate

<sup>25</sup> A//77/CRP.1/Add.8, page 16 (para. 60).

<sup>26</sup> A/RES/79/1, page 15 (para. 37f)

implementation strategies in place, keeping in mind the capacities of the missions. These strategies should also be revised as needed going forward, in response to changes in mandate or evolving operational conditions that require a reorientation of the mission.

**Indicators of implementation:** Updated guidance from DPPA on minimum requirements for planning requirements.

**Expected change:** Cluster 1 SPMs have clear guidance on strategic planning requirements.

## **Recommendation 2 (Result A and D)**

53. **Cluster 1 SPMs should fully implement the planning requirements of the updated guidance called for above, as relevant.** The implementation of the guidance should be aligned to the specific mission needs and mandates and should consider how to enhance inclusivity into their activities in order to continue to strengthen their effectiveness and responsiveness.

**Indicators of implementation:** Documentation from the SPMs reflecting strategic planning efforts are in place, in line with the updated guidance as relevant and within the scope of the SPM's mandate and resources.

**Expected change:** Cluster 1 SPMs are more adaptable and effective in responding to the evolving nature of their mandates.

## **Recommendation 3 (Result E)**

54. **DPPA, in consultation with cluster 1 SPMs, should leverage existing mechanisms and fora to ensure the needs for information, guidance, and knowledge sharing of cluster 1 SPMs are met.** Building on existing mechanisms and fora, DPPA should ensure that SPMs are well-informed about the range of available tools for information and knowledge sharing. Additionally, DPPA should reinforce feedback channels to regularly gather input from the SPMs to inform knowledge management and guidance development activities and ensure the needs and topics of interest of the SPMs are addressed.

**Indicators of implementation:** Evidence of DPPA outreach and processes in place to gather feedback on the needs and topics of interests of SPMs for information and knowledge-sharing.

**Expected change:** The needs of cluster 1 SPMs for sharing information and knowledge to advance their mandate implementation are better addressed.



## Annex 1: Evaluand management responses:


United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussion



United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions

Date: 14 May 2025

To: Demetra Arapakos  
Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division, Office of Internal Oversight  
Services

From: Ayşe Cihan Sultanoğlu   
UN Representative to the Geneva International Discussions

Subject: Acceptance of OIOS draft Report on Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific  
Special Political Missions, and its recommendations

1. Thank you for your memo of 2 May 2025 and the draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions.
2. I am pleased to confirm the acceptance by UNRGID of the report and its recommendations. Please find attached the completed recommendation action plan based on the template proposed by your Office.

At the same time, for the record, I would like to point out the following:

- While it is well understood in paragraph 19 and the accompanying figure 5 that the majority of stakeholders of UNRGID surveyed thought the mission was not sufficiently adaptive to evolving contexts, it should be noted that those surveyed do not include the views of the major stakeholders of the process, i.e. the participants of the GID itself, but results of interviews with the representatives of the other two co-chairing organizations and relevant UN entities.
- In paragraph 23 and the accompanying figure 8, it should be noted that the UNRGID is not a field-based entity.
- In paragraph 38 and the accompanying table 9, it should be noted that although new groups have not been included in the mandate of the SPM since its inception, the co-chairs and their teams meet with civil society, women and youth during their field visits for consultations.

Therefore, it would be appreciated if these comments can be reflected in the report, and if it is not possible, as footnotes, to reflect the context in which the UNRGID operates fully.

3. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for professionally conducting this important exercise and look forward to continuing our close cooperation with you.

Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs



TO: Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director  
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 14 May 2025

REFERENCE:  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

THROUGH:  
S/C DE:

FROM: Rosemary A. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General  
DE: for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

SUBJECT: **Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of  
Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions**  
OBJET:

1. We refer to your memorandum (OIOS-2025-0839) of 2 May 2025, transmitting the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the *Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions*. Thank you for undertaking a consultative process inclusive of staff at Headquarters and in field-based missions, and for incorporating many of the initial comments that our office submitted on the earlier draft of the report.
2. As the report noted, while Special Political Missions (SPMs) are uniquely positioned to convene stakeholders and facilitate dialogue, the efforts of Cluster I SPMs to mitigate the risk of violent conflict have yielded mixed results. This reflects the inherent complexity of the conflicts they address and the limits of their influence in the face of geopolitical polarization and regionalization of conflicts. As also noted in the report, there is room for improvement, particularly with regard to SPMs' strategic planning and the information and guidance shared by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) in that regard.
3. DPPA recalls that there is significant variance in the size and mandates of Cluster I SPMs, which results in diverse approaches to strategic planning and differing needs for planning tools. Nevertheless, the Department recognizes the importance of clear guidance on strategic planning requirements as well as information and knowledge-sharing. The report and its recommendations will help us to address challenges and further strengthen our work in these areas.
4. After reviewing the evaluation and its related recommendations, we are pleased to inform you that DPPA will be accepting the recommendations of OIOS set forth in the draft report. You will find attached a concrete action plan from DPPA to implement the recommendations of the report.
5. In response to the recommendation for updating guidance to cluster I SPMs to establish minimum planning requirements, DPPA notes that the 2014 mission concept guidelines were formally superseded in April 2025 by the co-signature of new joint guidelines by DPPA-DPO and DOS. These were transmitted via code-cable to all missions on 6 May.
6. With regards to the second recommendation on the implementation by Cluster I SPMs of such guidance where relevant, the new guidelines provide SPMs flexibility to use these planning tools as they deem most useful and where they have the capacity to do so. DPPA will continue to reach out to SPMs to ascertain if they require any support in mission planning.
7. The evaluation recommends that DPPA should ensure the needs for information, guidance and knowledge sharing of Cluster I SPMs are met. DPPA's Policy and Mediation Division will continue its monthly outreach to SPM focal points and based on the findings of this evaluation, will hold additional consultations with the seven Cluster I SPMs. As per our Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning, DPPA expects that SPMs will meet their responsibility of identifying lessons learned and best practices to strengthen the effectiveness and collective impact of the UN peace and security pillar.
8. Our office stands ready to provide any clarification or additional information that may be required. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

**United Nations**  
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF  
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR YEMEN



**الأمم المتحدة**  
مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن

**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

TO: Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director  
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 14 MAY 2025

REFERENCE: OSESGY/FO/5/14

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: Hans Grundberg  
DE: Special Envoy of the Secretary-General  
for Yemen

SUBJECT: **Response to Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of**  
OBJECT: **Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions**

1. OSESGY welcomes the OIOS-IED evaluation of Cluster I Special Political Missions. This is a timely and constructive report, particularly in light of the evolving operational challenges and increasing complexity faced by OSESGY and similar missions. The Office appreciates the recognition of its contributions to Yemen's peace process, including the 2022 Truce Agreement and other key developments, as well as its continued efforts to implement strategic planning processes aligned with HQ guidance.
2. OSESGY accepts all three recommendations of the evaluation and is committed to their effective implementation, in coordination with DPPA and our sister missions. In particular, the Office will:
  - a. Contribute substantively to the update of the 2014 Mission Concept Guidelines, ensuring that revised planning frameworks reflect the realities of complex mediation environments (Recommendation 1);
  - b. Align its internal planning systems with the forthcoming guidance (Recommendation 2); and
  - c. Actively participate in DPPA-led knowledge-sharing platforms and provide mission-level feedback to inform the development of tools, guidance, and shared learning (Recommendation 3).
3. Additional information is provided in the attached action plan.
4. In reviewing the draft report, OSESGY appreciates the overall positive assessment and offers the following reflections to further contextualize and complement the findings in three key areas:
5. **Diplomatic Engagement and International Coordination (Linked to Result C):**  
The evaluation's distinction between formal and informal engagement warrants clarification in the context of OSESGY's work. All interactions between the Office and members of the diplomatic community are formal in nature and consistently documented through notes to file, code cables, and public communications. These engagements, whether conducted through structured coordination mechanisms or bilateral diplomatic channels, are central to building consensus and promoting coherence among international and regional partners. While the evaluation usefully references institutionalized mechanisms in other contexts, a clearer distinction between structurally formalized arrangements and other forms of formal, systematic diplomatic engagement would offer a more accurate reflection of OSESGY's contribution to the areas covered by Result C.

6. **Engagement with Broader Constituencies and Partners (Linked to Results D & E):**  
 OSESGY engages a wide range of stakeholders and international partners in support of an inclusive political process. This includes direct collaboration with civil society and Track II actors, as well as participation in coordination mechanisms such as the EU-supported Track II Peacebuilding Forum. In addition, OSESGY has held consultations with over 600 diverse Yemeni stakeholders, including women, youth, tribal leaders, and marginalized groups, through initiatives designed to foster inclusive participation and integrate gender perspectives across all areas of the peace process, in line with the Women, Peace and Security agenda. These efforts are central to OSESGY's inclusive approach, reinforcing national and local ownership. While the evaluation references aspects of this engagement, a more comprehensive reflection on OSESGY's direct coordination with external actors would have further illustrated its contribution to the areas covered by Results D and E and supported the identification of effective practices.
7. **Strategic Communications and Public Engagement (Linked to Result D):**  
 While the evaluation's methodology excluded communications from its core scope, I wish to underscore the central role that public engagement plays in OSESGY's mandate delivery. Through the Political Dialogues Series, in-person focus groups, large-scale perception surveys, and extended public reporting, my Office has sought to promote inclusive two-way communication with the Yemeni public. These efforts foster transparency, broaden participation, and ensure that Yemeni perspectives are meaningfully reflected throughout our efforts. The inclusion of stakeholder perception data in the evaluation provides a welcome point of reflection, and I encourage future assessments to consider public engagement as a strategic dimension relevant to the areas addressed under Result D.
8. OSESGY remains committed to inclusive, adaptive, and responsive implementation of its Mandate in support of a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process.

Best regards,

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar



TO: Demetra Arapakos, Director Inspection and Evaluation  
 A: Division Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 13 May 2025

REFERENCE: OIOS\_report

THROUGH:  
 S/C DE: CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

FROM: Julie Bishop, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General  
 DE: on Myanmar

SUBJECT: **Response to the Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of**  
 OBJET: **Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions**

1. This refers to your memo of 2 May transmitting the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions.
2. I have reviewed the report and confirm that I accept all three recommendations as applicable to my office. The attached Recommendation Action Plan details the anticipated actions of my office and timelines for implementing the recommendations.
3. I would also like to appreciate the excellent communication and cooperation of OIOS throughout this process and thank Mr. Juan Carlos Peña, Mr. Daouda Badio and Ms. Jiayi He for their professionalism and efforts to understand the specific and complex context in which we and other Cluster I Special Political Missions operate.
4. We look forward to the final report and working with OIOS to monitor progress on the recommendations.



## Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Cyprus



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CYPRUS  
P.O. BOX 25644 1311 NICOSIA, CYPRUS TEL: 22 61 4116 FAX: 357 22 61 4146

### INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: 19 May 2025

REF:

TO: Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division  
A: Office of Internal Oversight Services

Mr. Juan Carlos Pena, Chief of Section, Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

FROM: Colin Stewart

DE: Deputy Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus

SUBJECT: Formal Management Response to the Draft Report of the Office of Internal  
OBJET: Services on the Evaluation of Cluster I Conflict-Specific Special Political  
Missions

1. This refers to the memo of 2 May 2025 (OIOS-2025-0839) by which you transmitted the draft report of the Office of Internal Services on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions for review and formal comments.
2. I reviewed the draft report and welcome its findings. In particular, I welcome the conclusions that OSASG-Cyprus was recognized as the only interlocutor working on the Cyprus peace process that was able to engage the two parties on an equal basis, and has played a critical role contributing to trust-building between the Cypriot communities. I further welcome the observation that the facilitation of the Technical Committees was deemed effective by both sides and contributed to fostering engagement, mutual understanding, and tangible bi-communal initiatives.
3. I appreciate the acknowledgment that limited financial and human resources were identified as a constraint to improve the delivery of Cluster I Special Political Missions' respective mandates.
4. I also take note of the findings of the draft report that point to the need to improve meaningful engagement with youth and other underrepresented groups. Actions are already in place to promote inclusivity and meaningful engagement with these groups.
5. On the issue of regular engagement with the diplomatic community (on the island and outside), I would like to note that OSASG-Cyprus engages with the diplomatic community regularly, as indicated in multiple Secretary-General's reports on his Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus. For instance, the Mission provides regular bi-annual briefings to the diplomatic community, engages regularly on a bilateral basis with Embassies and other diplomatic actors, and conducts regular engagement with officials from the Guarantor Powers, P5 and members of the Security Council more broadly as well as with European Union officials. With regard to Civil Society, the office regularly convenes and organizes dedicated events, meetings and consultations with various local and international civil society organizations/actors. To demonstrate this, out of 2397 meetings logged during the evaluated period (2021-2024), there were 768 meetings with diplomatic community actors (including European Union officials) and 465 meetings with civil society actors. Source documentation can be provided if needed.

6. OSASG-Cyprus will continue to review and assess ways to improve its efforts to bring Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots closer together, facilitate dialogue and seek opportunities for cooperation, assisting the parties to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the situation in Cyprus.

7. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Daouda Badio and Ms. Jiayi He for their professionalism, commitment and teamwork, which have been highly commendable, as well as the time invested and dedication to acquaint themselves with the political sensitivities related to the mandate of the Mission. The inclusive approach throughout the evaluation process and their openness to receive our Mission's inputs are greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, OIOS  
Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, DPPA  
Mr. Daouda Badio, OIOS  
Ms. Jiayi He, OIOS  
Mr. Sergiy Illarionov, OSASG-Cyprus  
Ms. Sherry Holbrook, OSASG-Cyprus  
Ms. Shira Giveon, OSASG-Cyprus

## Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara

### United Nations Nations Unies

OFFICE OF THE PERSONAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR WESTERN SAHARA  
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

To: Demetra Arakapos, Director  
Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

Date: 14 May 2025

From: Staffan de Mistura  
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General  
for Western Sahara



**Subject: Draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions**

1. Thank you for your memorandum dated 2 May 2025 in which you transmitted, for our review and response, the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions.

2. I am pleased to confirm acceptance by my office of the report and its recommendations. As requested, please find attached the completed recommendation action plan template.

3. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the evaluation team for their professionalism, commitment and teamwork, and to express my appreciation for the conduct of this important study.

cc: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, DPPA

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria

**UNITED NATIONS**  
Office of the Special Envoy for Syria



**الأمم المتحدة**  
مكتب المبعوث الخاص لسورية

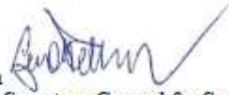
**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Ms. Demetra Arapakos, Director  
**A:** Inspection and Evaluation Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

**DATE:** 26 May 2025

**REFERENCE:**

**THROUGH:**  
**S/C DE:**

**FROM:** Mr. Geir O. Pedersen   
**DE:** Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria

**SUBJECT:** Response to the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of  
**OBJET:** Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions

1. I refer to your memorandum of 2 May 2025 transmitting the Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Inspection and Evaluation Division, on the Evaluation of Cluster I conflict-specific Special Political Missions (SPMs). We appreciate the opportunity to review and respond to the report and its recommendations.
2. We note that two of the three recommendations are directed primarily to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). OSE-Syria accepts the recommendation addressed to Cluster I SPMs and remains committed to contributing to broader efforts to strengthen strategic coherence and field-level effectiveness.
3. On Recommendation 3, we appreciate DPPA's efforts in expanding information-sharing and support mechanisms. OSE-Syria has benefited from this support and stands ready to contribute feedback to help strengthen and streamline existing platforms and tools. In the spirit of continuous improvement and in line with the UN 80 efficiency principles, we see value in a focused review of existing platforms and knowledge products to identify opportunities for streamlining and enhancing accessibility.
4. We thank OIOS for this timely evaluation, which we believe will support institutional learning and effectiveness across Cluster I SPMs.

cc: Mr. Rami Shehadeh, Chief of Staff, OSE-Syria