

Hoping to build with ‘incremental, constructive steps’ – UN envoy for Syria

25 March 2017 – Speaking to the media in Geneva yesterday, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria said that he is not expecting miracles, breakthroughs or breakdowns but is hoping to build on the previous rounds of talks on the war-ravaged country with some incremental, constructive steps.

“All invitees and delegations who were present here [...] are feeling that it was worth it to come and all came. None of them has threatened to leave [...] which is a sign of maturity and of responsibility particularly in difficult moments like this one,” said UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura at a media stakeout at the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG), yesterday.

Underscoring the importance attached to the fifth round of the talks, Mr. de Mistura added that he has been particularly attentive, trying to engage with and having support from all the regional players, interlocutors and stakeholders.

He further mentioned that the discussions that took place earlier in Riyadh (capital of Saudi Arabia), Moscow (Russia) and Ankara (Turkey) conveyed a strong feeling of the need to build on the fourth round of the Geneva talks, which took place from 23 February to 3 March.

“Hence, our expectation and the stronger suggestion to the guarantors of the Astana process that they do retake the situation in hand and that hopefully there will be new Astana meeting as soon as possible in order to control the situation which at the moment is worrisome,” added the UN Special Envoy.

He also informed the media that the meeting yesterday focused into substance and that the agenda had been established and strongly supported by the Security Council.

Mr. De Mistura further noted that given the importance of the current round of intra-Syrian talks and in view of the tensions within the country, he would be travelling to Syria to meet with members of the Arab League as well as bilateral meetings on the situation.

“Meanwhile the talks will continue under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ramzy [Ezzeldin Ramzy, the Deputy Special Envoy for Syria,] but I felt it was important to engage as many regional players as possible and they all happen to be in one room,” said the UN Special Envoy.