

'Time to shift from logic of war,' put interests of Syrian people first, UN Security Council told

30 August 2017 – Calling for creative ways to work towards peace in Syria, the United Nations Special Envoy today outlined the political path forward, which includes holding another round of the so-named Astana talks and behind-the-scenes efforts by the international community.

"This is a time for realism and focus, for shifting from the logic of war to that of negotiation, and for putting the interests of the Syrian people first. If I could identify one thing above all that can make the difference, it will be a sense of unity of purpose internationally with clear priorities and common goals," UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, told the Security Council.

He noted that the next round of what has become known as the 'Astana talks' between the Syrian conflict parties and led by Russia, Turkey and Iran will be held on 14 and 15 September.

These three countries will need to keep actively working, as they have been doing, on de-escalation," Mr. de Mistura said, adding that he and his team will be supporting these efforts.

The UN official also noted the key role that Saudi Arabia and other countries with influence over the opposition have in fostering cohesion and realism of the opposition." Mr. de Mistura said his office is ready to convene further technical talks to support Saudi efforts on unifying the opposition.

In addition, he noted the importance of working with the Government of Syria. He said that it will be vital for those countries with influence to assess the situation carefully and signal a genuine readiness for dialogue and inclusion on the country's political future.

Today's briefing comes just weeks ahead of the annual high-level opening segment of the UN General Assembly, where the European Union will host a special event in New York which will serve as an opportunity to address future resilience and stabilization efforts, and support the humanitarian needs in Syria, Mr. de Mistura said.

These events will all take place ahead of the convocation of the formal [intra-Syrian talks](#) in Geneva later in October.

"This is designed to give time for the dynamics I have just described to reach a further stage of maturity," the senior UN official said.

He added "it is my hope that both the Syrian Government and the opposition will come to Geneva then to engage in formal negotiations."

Also today, the Council heard from outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, who steps down tomorrow.