

Panel Discussion proposal: CESS 2019

Panel title: **Role of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy in Central Asia**

Panel Organizers: The United Nations

Panel Abstract:

The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), established in 2007 upon the initiative of the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), aims to identify and address existing and potential threats to regional stability and to support fostering regional cooperation among the five countries. Over the past 12 years, these five countries have experienced significant and uneven changes to their political, economic or social environments. With the core mandate of the UNRCCA remaining preventive diplomacy, the UNRCCA continues to engage in identifying pressing common concerns in the region through consultation with the governments and civil societies. Against this background, UNRCCA in 2018-2020 focuses on trans-boundary water management, counter-terrorism, engagement with Afghanistan and human rights. Recently, the region has witnessed significant improvements in the level of cooperation among these states. Indeed, armed clashes have all but disappeared, the increased level of political trust between the leaders is palpable, advances in cross-border cooperation are visible every day.

These positive developments should not obscure the fact that much remains to be done, particularly at the grass root level, for the younger generation and marginalized communities. As the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, "The world is more connected, yet societies are becoming more fragmented." People's participation and ownership of regional exchanges and cooperation is a key element in sustaining peace. In this context, the question of what regional cooperation means for the people in Central Asia in 2020s needs to be addressed as well as how the UN can best articulate its activities to better meet these emerging needs. Does a girl in Bishkek and parents in Khorog share the same view on sustaining peace? How about social cohesion, equality, or freedom? Does younger population enjoy peace dividends provided by the success in national-level regional cooperation, or not? And how the United Nations can support both government and the population to enjoy sustaining peace? Academic studies on these pressing issues will allow the UNRCCA to further develop a strategy for the preventive diplomacy in Central Asia.

This roundtable provides the opportunity to re-think what constitutes sustaining peace in Central Asia in the next decade and, particularly how the practitioners, such as the UN can engage stakeholders beyond governments. Participants are encouraged to introduce research topics which contributes to identifying needs for different societies and developing the path toward sustaining peace in Central Asia in 2020s.

We welcome topics that address and critically explore these and related questions. Please send a paper title and abstract of 250 words to Naoko Takahashi (naoko.takahashi@un.org) no later than March 26, 2019.

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