Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN in Geneva

Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the UN in Geneva

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN in Geneva
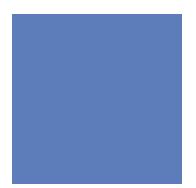
Permanent Mission of Turkey to the UN in Geneva

Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN in Geneva

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Current developments & vision for the future

Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia have developed a cooperation framework called MIKTA. In preparation for the Ministerial MIKTA meeting in Seoul, MIKTA countries, permanent representations, civil society and academia convened on 24 April 2015 to generate input for MIKTA cooperation and how it can move forward. The seminar was held in Geneva – described by some participants as the 'engine room' or the 'landscape to generate MIKTA momentum'.

The Geneva community listened to an opening statement by **Ambassador Seokyoung Choi,** after which the first panel discussed MIKTA and the UN. Swiss **Ambassador Alexandre Fasel** opened the panel by acknowledging Swiss support for MIKTA and by sharing his personal, intellectual view of the cooperation framework. **Ms Charlotte Warakaulle**, Chief of Political Affairs and Partnerships at the UN Office in Geneva discussed the potentials of MIKTA from a UN perspective, followed by **Dr Jonathan Woolley**, director of the Quaker United Nations Office, who provided a view from civil society. Finally, **Professor Lichia Saner-Yiu** from the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development

explained how MIKTA could play a role in monitoring and reporting.

The second panel focused on two of the issue areas on which MIKTA could focus: disaster risk reduction (DRR) and cybersecurity. The first speaker, **Mr Marc Gordon** from UNISDR, talked about MIKTA's potential in relation to the recently established Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. **Mr Daniel Kull** from the World Bank gave a complementary account of the role of MIKTA in DRR, particularly in the area of disaster risk finance and insurance. In the cybersecurity component of the seminar, **Mr Ben Baseley-Walker** from UNIDIR and **Mr Nick Ashton-Hart** from the Internet & Digital Ecosystem Alliance sketched the cybersecurity challenges and proposed ways in which MIKTA could contribute to digital security.

The seminar closed after a short and fruitful discussion and the closing remarks by **Dr Jovan Kurbalija**, director of DiploFoundation. This report thematically outlines the main issues and dilemmas that were discussed during the seminar and summarises the proposals that were made by the conference participants.

Key dilemmas in MIKTA diplomacy

Dilemma 1: How to evaluate diversity

One of MIKTA's most obvious characteristics is the degree of diversity among its members. Rather than an obstacle, diversity was celebrated as a feature that enabled debates to move debates. Although MIKTA has considerable internal coherence in terms of economic strength, it has great regional and cultural internal variety, as was pointed out by Ambassador Fasel and Ms Warakaulle. Ms Warakaulle referred to the symbolic strength of diversity as an example of how working across different traditions and backgrounds is possible and could help to break down silos.

The metaphor of a bridge was often used to describe the potential of MIKTA's diversity, although Mr. Mehmet Ferden Çarikçi, permanent representative of Turkey, pointed out that rather than a bridge, MIKTA should be seen as a hub for convergence. Dr Jonathan Woolley similarly saw the utility of diversity, as he explained that MIKTA's internal diversity might enable it to connect positively to the diversity beyond its states in the whole UN system. In the domain of cybersecurity, Mr Nick Ashton-Hart mentioned that the diversity of MIKTA may help to generate creative ideas. In sum, although diversity is often seen as an obstacle, there was general consensus in the room that MIKTA's diversity was rather a potential.

Dilemma 2: How to avoid duplicating existing groups and be a 'convergence builder'

Working in groups has distinctive advantages over unilateral activities. As Dr Jonathan Woolley pointed out, small ad hoc groups can often make the difference in complex negotiations, as they can create innovative and surprising outcomes. Furthermore, Dr Jovan Kurbalija stressed the dynamics of empathy and compromise that add to the value of operating in groups. However, several of the participants mentioned that, even though flexible arrangements can be useful to move diplomatic debates forward, there is an ongoing proliferation of groups, and that there is – in the words of Ambassador Fasel – a 'group magma' in the UN. It is therefore important to understand the correct 'DNA' of an effective group.

According to Ambassador Fasel, this DNA consists of the ability to move from multipolar divergence to multilateral convergence. As such, it should prevent becoming another bloc, but attempt to become a new bridge – or hub. During a previous event on MIKTA, Dr Petru Dumitriu, former ambassador of the Council of Europe, defined effective minilateralism as 'bringing to the same table the smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem'. In order to achieve this, MIKTA should be open and transparent, elements that were continuously stressed in the conference. One of the participants, however, raised the question of whether MIKTA would truly engage with other countries once it had established internal coherence. A related question raised was whether MIKTA should be seen as a coordinating group in multilateral diplomacy at the international level, or was it rather a mechanism for cooperation between MIKTA's capitals?

Dilemma 3: Should issues be separated, converged, focused, or broad?

MIKTA's representation in Geneva has outlined five areas of possible focus: UN governance, global health, DRR, humanitarian affairs and gender. Although each area has been brought forward by a different country, Ms Charlotte Warakaulle encouraged MIKTA to ensure that these issue areas were not compartmentalised. She suggested that MIKTA could advocate a holistic approach and build connections. The need to build connections was furthermore stressed by the speakers on the DRR and cybersecurity panels, as both sectors need to deal with bridging policy silos, operating at the intersection of a wide range of sections, including human rights, development, humanitarian affairs, trade, and security. MIKTA could, as such, facilitate the linkages between the different issue areas holistically. Yet, as much as the utility of a holistic approach is valued, the real challenge may well be to raise be awareness of the big picture and the interconnections of the issues facing the international community, to move out of silos, while at the same time reaching international agreements on specific issues and making practical, concrete progress.

MIKTA proposals

General proposals

- MIKTA countries could assume **leadership** at the regional level to implement international agreements, such as the Sendai Framework.
- MIKTA countries could help developing countries by sharing their first hand **experience.**

Issue areas

- MIKTA could focus on **disarmament**, an issue that already receives strong support from MIKTA countries and needs more sustained attention.
- MIKTA could focus on **climate change**, an issue that intersects with all five areas that have already been identified by the MIKTA missions in Geneva.
- MIKTA could focus on **monitoring and reporting** and create a Common Reporting Platform in inter-related areas with potential overlaps, such as sustainable development and humanitarian assistance.

Visibility

- MIKTA could feature prominently at key events, including:
    - **G20** discussions, in which all MIKTA states are represented.
    - The **World Humanitarian Summit** in Istanbul in 2016.
    - **Habitat III** in Quito in 2016, especially considering MIKTA's experience with urban challenges.

Disaster risk reduction

MIKTA countries have played an active role in DRR, particularly in the adoption of the Sendai Framework in March 2015. At the same time, they are also countries that have had to face the consequences of disasters at home. As such, MIKTA could play an important role in DRR.

DRR proposals

- Build on the areas of **expertise** of the individual MIKTA countries.
- Support the integration of DRR into **intergovernmental processes**.
- Actively promote, support and implement the **Sendai Framework**.
- Empower **local authorities** to manage disaster risks.
- Assist in **humanitarian financing**.
- Push for coherency in **authorising environments**, especially considering that MIKTA countries have experience as both donors and recipients.

Cybersecurity

MIKTA countries have a strong interest in cybersecurity, as evidenced by the fact that many key events in the Internet policy field and cybersecurity fields have been – or will be – organised by MIKTA countries (e.g. Internet Governance Forums, Cyberspace conferences, ITU Plenipotentiary meetings).

Cybersecurity proposals

- Help avoid fragmentation of the cybersecurity debate by fostering **confidence** and promoting **transparency.**
- Promote a view of digital security as a **positive endpoint** where concerns as human rights, data protection, law enforcement, and public safety are viewed as different sides of the same coin and more than the sum of their parts rather than a zero-sum trade-off.
- Support **confidence building measures** in cybersecurity on bilateral, MIKTA, regional and global levels.
- Coordinate **collaboration between institution** on Internet-related policy activities so the interrelationships between institutions can be a source of strength and improve institutional and delegates' capacity.

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Can MIKTA help in transforming the increasing multipolar divergence into multilateral convergence? 'The jury is out, but the prospects are good.'

- Ambassador Alexandre Fasel

For any further questions, please write to diplo@diplomacy.edu

A background policy brief is available at: www.diplomacy.edu/mikta

The full photo gallery is available at:
http://diplo.smugmug.com/Events/2015/MIKTA-diplomacy/

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