

**WHS Istanbul, 23 May 2016**

**High Level Roundtable on Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts (11:30–13:30)**

**Intervention by Prime Minister Juha Sipilä**

Co-Chairs, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for convening this Summit and we express our appreciation to the Government of Turkey for hosting it. We welcome the Secretary General's report and confirm our support to the five core responsibilities in it.

The theme of our round table discussion is timely and affects us all.

What we have witnessed in Europe over the past year is what has been happening in many countries for decades: people fleeing conflict and terror, people leaving their homes in search of a better future for themselves and for their children.

Last autumn, for the first time since the Second World War, we witnessed a significant influx of people into Finland. And we were reminded that, in the end, we are all affected by conflicts in one way or another – even if they take place somewhere far.

We were also reminded that there are no quick or easy solutions. And that solutions can only be sustainable if we manage to cooperate and agree on fair burden-sharing between countries.

The international community has managed to create many mechanisms for addressing human suffering. We as political leaders must pay tribute to all humanitarian aid organizations and their staff; men and women in difficult situations around the world, who unselfishly help those in need.

We must also remind ourselves of the importance of our international legal framework. We must not tolerate its repeated violation.

We must increase our efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. Most of the humanitarian needs today arise from man-made conflicts. They need to be resolved through dialogue and negotiations and not by the use of weapons and military force. Finland together with Turkey co-chairs the Group of Friends of Mediation in the United Nations. We do this because we believe in mediation as an effective – including cost-effective – way of resolving crises in a sustainable way. We will do our best to further strengthen the normative basis and the resources for mediation.

True leadership in preventing and ending conflicts also means bringing forward those voices that are not sufficiently heard. Women are still underrepresented in most processes aiming at ending conflicts. This needs to change. It is a question of justice and equality, and it is also a question of fully benefitting from the invaluable insights that women all over the world can bring to conflict resolution.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of international cooperation. It is always a process of give and take, but in the end we all stand to gain from it. Let us use this Summit to renew our commitment to working together. We owe it to the victims of conflicts and emergencies, and we owe it to those helping them.

I thank you for your attention.