

“Madrid + 20 – Lessons Learned”

Madrid, 2-4 December 2011

Palacio de Viana, C/ Duque de Rivas 1

Summary

On 2-4 December 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Madrid 1991 Middle East Peace Conference, the Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) hosted a meeting, “Madrid + 20 - Lessons Learned”. The objective of the event was to draw ‘lessons learned’ from the past, assess current conditions, and point towards new ways forward to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. It involved influential figures and former officials from the Middle East, Europe and the USA. The following is a general summary of the discussions:

- Many participants alluded to the reality that matters were no longer ‘business as usual’, and that the peace process was, if not finished, almost so. There is a need for a profound “game-changer” if the two-state solution is to survive. The deviation from the Madrid process to Oslo, with the consequent shift from core issues to conflict management, from a comprehensive to a strictly bilateral approach, and from clear terms of reference to constructive ambiguity, was cited as a key problem.

- This also resulted in a dissociation between the peace process and events on the ground, as well as further distance and less understanding between the societies. A lack of political will, the “blame game”, and the fact that the two sides ultimately wanted “different solutions” were also pointed to as major causes of failure.

- Some believed that a solution could today be pursued but only with an extreme urgency, given the changes in the region. If constructive and realistic steps were not taken soon, violence could become the only future “game-changer”. Others expressed that new and ongoing initiatives, such as non-violent and ‘diplomatic’ resistance, would redress the imbalance of power, and ultimately lead to more successful talks. The goal however is not simply to return to negotiations, but to resolve the conflict.

- There was a strong sense that matters were on the cusp of moving from a possible two-state solution towards other realities, including forms of a one-state. The group was asked to remember the difference between a two-state solution and two states (shaped by unilateral action), as well between a one state solution and a one state nightmare. The injection of younger participants into the meeting provided new perspectives regarding the process, and an openness to consider new paradigms and values.

Sponsored by:



Supported by:

