

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SYRIA GEIR O. PEDERSEN STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE SMALL BODY OF THE SYRIAN CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

25 Mar 2022

The Seventh Session of the Syrian Constitutional Committee concluded today in Geneva. This Session was convened following consultations with both Co-Chairs, and an invitation letter that I sent them and the Middle Third outlining the agreed methodology that would be followed, including on a mechanism for organizing the discussions on the fifth day.

Based on that, the Committee members in the first four days discussed draft constitutional texts on four basic constitutional principles:

- Basics of Governance, submitted by nominees of the Syrian Negotiations Commission.
- State Identity, submitted by some of the civil society nominees.
- State Symbols, submitted by nominees of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.
- Regulation and Functions of Public Authorities, submitted by nominees of the Syrian Negotiations Commission.

On the fifth day, in line with the agreement, the delegations were expected to submit revisions to reflect the content of the discussions during the previous four days. All delegations offered at least some revisions to some of the texts presented. Some of these embodied amendments indicating an attempt to reflect the content of the discussions and narrow differences. Others contained no changes.

Before the Committee began its work this week, I appealed to the members to work with the sense of seriousness and compromise that the situation demands. This would be in line with the *Terms of Reference*

and Core Rules of Procedure, which state that the Committee should be governed by a sense of compromise and constructive engagement aimed at reaching general agreement of its members.

Two-and-a-half years after the launching of the Constitutional Committee – an event that took nearly two years to bring about – there is a clear need for this commitment to be embodied in the Committee’s work, so that substantive issues begin to be bridged, and that the Committee begins to move substantively forward on its mandate to prepare and draft for popular approval a constitutional reform. The Committee members’ discussions today underscored why this is so important.

To this end, I will do everything I can to bring closer viewpoints among the members through exerting my good offices, which is plainly needed. I will engage with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian Negotiations Commission. I will engage with the Co-Chairs and the civil society delegation of the Committee.