
DOHA FORUM 2025 CONCLUDES WITH A FOCUS ON MEDIATION, NEGOTIATION AND AFRICA-GCC COLLABORATION



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H.E. Malebona Precious Matsoso wins Negotiator of the Year Award at Doha World Negotiation

Day

DOHA, Qatar, 8 December: Doha Forum 2025 concluded with a dedicated day of partner-led

sessions, collaborative engagements, and hands-on negotiation training, reflecting the

commitments, insights, and shared priorities that emerged across the global gathering. The

discussions reinforced Doha Forum's role as a broad platform for cooperation, partnership-building, and continued dialogue beyond the headline plenaries of the first two days.

Doha World Negotiation Day 2025

The second edition of Doha World Negotiation Day, organized by UNITAR in partnership with Doha Forum, convened under the theme "Negotiating Peace in a Fragmented World." The high-level Forum united some of the world's most renowned contributors to peaceful negotiations and conflict resolution, offering strategic insights into the evolving role of preventive diplomacy amid rising global fractures.

The gathering concluded with the presentation of the Doha Best Negotiator of the Year Award, awarded to H.E. Malebona Precious Matsoso, recognizing outstanding achievement in international diplomacy. Ms. Matsoso is a prominent South African public health leader, former Director-General of South Africa's National Department of Health, and a key figure in global health governance, currently co-chairing the WHO's Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) for a Pandemic Agreement.

Commenting on the significance of the event, Maha Al-Kuwari, General Manager, Doha Forum said, "Doha World Negotiation Day has once again shown why negotiation remains one of our strongest tools in a world that is increasingly complex and fragmented. As we heard today, from

preventative diplomacy to peacebuilding, negotiation is more than a method; it is a mindset.”

H.E. María Fernanda Espinosa, Former President of the UN General Assembly, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Former Minister of National Defense of Ecuador, said, “In a fragmented world, in a polarized world, peace must be negotiated, not assumed as a fact. And preventive diplomacy must become our default setting, not our last resource.”

Qatar Mediation Forum

Qatar Mediation Forum was held in parallel, convening a high-level panel of mediators, policymakers, and institutional leaders, who examined the structural shifts reshaping peace processes worldwide. Discussions addressed diminishing trust in global norms, weakened institutions, and the growing complexity of conflicts in regions including Sudan, Gaza, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

H.E. Dr. Majed Al Ansari, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commented on the importance of involving non-state actors in mediation efforts: “Most of the work that is done with conflict resolutions is not with states but with non-state actors. [Yet] the capacities of International organisations and NGOs have been reduced. It is our part to empower these agencies and NGOs to be part of the mediation process.”

Alex de Waal, Executive Director, World Peace Foundation, commented: “It is astonishing that we are not talking about world peace. There was a time when leaders routinely addressed this, Gandhi, Nasser, Kaunda, Haile Selassie, and others. Among those leaders capable of waging world war, few today speak of peace. The last Western leader to speak with passion and urgency on this topic was President John F. Kennedy.”

Dr. Comfort Ero, CEO & President, International Crisis Group, reflected on the new US approach inspired by President Donald Trump’s art of dealmaking and the potential new pathways it opens up. “The path to get into peace is not easy but we will not undermine or sell off mediation. The path to get there requires you to do things differently and think differently. As much as we want to criticise an approach, if it manages to silence the guns, then we will take it.”

Africa-GCC Cooperation and Shared Prosperity

Partner-led engagements throughout the day highlighted growing economic and diplomatic ties across regions. The Africa-Gulf Cooperation Dialogue, organised by Choiseul, brought leaders from both regions together to advance cooperation in investment, connectivity, sustainable development and geopolitical coordination.

Carole Kariuki, CEO of Kenya Private Sector Alliance, set the scene for deeper Gulf-African cooperation commenting, “Africa’s population is large, youthful, and growing rapidly. According

to the UN World Population Prospects 2024 data: Africa's population is projected to rise from approximately 1.5 billion in 2025 to 1.9 billion in 2035. Africa's food import bill is around USD 70 billion annually, yet the continent has untapped agricultural potential, creating a market opportunity that the Africa Development Bank estimates could be worth USD 1 trillion by 2030."

The Role of Faith Leaders in Defending the UN Charter and International Law

This session navigated the vital role of religious leaders and faith-based actors in defending the principles of the UN Charter amid rising conflicts, polarization, and humanitarian crises. Dr. Edward Kessler, Founder, Woolf Institute UK, spoke about the importance of recognizing the extremism in our communities.

Dr. Omar Suleiman, Founder Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, commented, "when any community is being harmed, even if it's by our own, we stand up, we can be authentic with the pain that we feel but we can also be courageous and challenge pain inflicted by people wearing the same garb as us."

The Forum was attended by 6500 participants, representing more than 170 countries. In its 23rd edition, Doha Forum served as a leading platform for constructive dialogue that inspires change, convening heads of state, diplomats, policymakers and global experts.

Full recordings of sessions can be found on the Forum's official YouTube channel.

