

Beat: Politics

## **UNSG OFFICIALLY APPOINTS STAFFAN MISTURA NEW PERSONAL ENVOY FOR MOROCCAN SAHARA**

### **HE HAS 40 YEARS OF DIPLOMACY EXPERIENCE**

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**USPA NEWS** - "Mr. De Mistura has 40 years of experience in diplomacy and political affairs, especially in the field of conflict management and resolution. Italian-Swiss diplomat Staffan de Mistura has been officially appointed by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, as his new Personal Envoy for the Moroccan Sahara. The Moroccan Sahara conflict has been ongoing for over 43 years, and UN-moderated dialogue has traditionally led to further divergences and mutual distrust. Mr. De Mistura will succeed former envoy Horst Kohler, who resigned on May 22, 2019, for health issues. Mr. De Mistura has 40 years of experience in diplomacy and political affairs, especially in the field of conflict management and resolution." Source: South Africa Embassy

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SAHARA"Italian-Swiss diplomat Staffan de Mistura has been officially appointed by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, as his new Personal Envoy for the Moroccan Sahara. The Moroccan Sahara conflict has been ongoing for over 43 years, and UN-moderated dialogue has traditionally led to further divergences and mutual distrust. Mr. De Mistura will succeed former envoy Horst Kohler, who resigned on May 22, 2019, for health issues. Mr. De Mistura has 40 years of experience in diplomacy and political affairs, especially in the field of conflict management and resolution. A veteran UN diplomat, Mr. De Mistura has served the organization in several sensitive, difficult positions, including as a Special Envoy of the UNSG in Syria. Mr. De Mistura held several other positions, including Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and for Iraq, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Southern Lebanon, and Director of the United Nations Information Center in Rome. In addition to Syria, the diplomat also served as the UN's focal point in various conflict areas, including Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia, among many others.-----

Outside of his UN career, Mr. De Mistura also served as Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and thereafter Deputy Foreign Minister in Italy.

**STAFFAN MISTURA SPEAKS ANY LANGUAGES**-----Fluent in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish, as well as Arabic (colloquial), the diplomat will have to tackle one of the most complicated dossiers in the world. The Moroccan Sahara conflict has been ongoing for over 43-years, and UN-assisted dialogue between the conflicting parties has mostly led to further divergences and mutual distrust.

After months of renewed hopes around a "new momentum" between 2017-2019, the UN-led political process was frozen for over two years after the resignation of Kohler, who was able to convene the conflicting parties for peace talks around two roundtable discussions in Geneva. The parties to the conflict - Morocco, Mauritania, pseudo-polisario, and Algeria, had all expressed satisfaction with Kohler's approach during the time, and the mood at the UN was largely optimistic about the outcome of the Moroccan Sahara political process. But Mr. Kohler's resignation killed the much-feted new momentum, and the resumption of hostilities in Guerguerat late last year appears to have widened the existing gulf of mistrust." Source: Embassy of Morocco in South Africa.

#### **Article online:**

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