Following the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report, the United Nations system and its partners are tasked to streamline conflict prevention efforts by contributing to better synergies, coordination and cooperation of the various actors engaging in peacemaking, peace support and peacebuilding. Yet, the emphasis on peace operations still generates ethical and philosophical challenges in regard to their mandate, including concerns about the legitimacy of more robust actions and the limited levels of civil-military cooperation. As such, international mediation becomes a very relevant and important political strategy together with peace support operations to create a viable and permissible environment.

In this context, how do peace operations impact the durability of (mediated) peace agreements? Different dimensions of the relationship between peace operations, international mediation and the durability of peace will be explored in this workshop, which will promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between academics and practitioners from different regions.

The workshop will be held on 28 May 2018 (9 a.m. - 6 p.m.) at the BRICS Policy Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Four sessions are planned to cover the following topics:

- **Session 1**: Conflict Environment: peace operations as humanitarian interventions
- **Session 2**: National, regional and global interests in peace operations: contributions from case studies
- **Session 3**: Opportunities and challenges for peacebuilding: experiences from Colombia
- **Session 4**: “Soft power” and peace operations: the Brazilian experience

Panelists will be invited to make short propositions or arguments (10-12 minutes) along the lines of the proposed sessions in order to stimulate discussions. Audience members will be selected according to their expertise and may also have the opportunity to share their thoughts, insights and experiences during all sessions. All participants are expected to actively take part on the debates. If you have a paper on the topic, a policy document or a short presentation, you will also be able to share it with other participants. Places are limited to 40 participants in total.

**Applications**

Those who wish to participate as panelists in one of the sessions or as audience members are invited to apply by 30 March 2018, by filling our online application form.

Your application form will include a proposal (up to 250 words) in which you are invited to share your previous research and/or field experiences, projects, questions and comments that can contribute to debates on the topics listed above, whether you participate as a panelist or as a member of the audience. You should also upload a resume and provide your contact information. If you apply to participate as a panelist, you will be asked to choose two of the sessions above in order of preference. Researchers, practitioners, PhD students, military personnel, diplomatic staff and peace journalists are particularly encouraged to apply.

Notification of acceptance will be made at the latest on 18 April 2018. If you have any questions concerning the workshop or your application, please contact the Global South Unit for Mediation (GSUM) by sending an email to: gsum@bricspolicycenter.org

Workshop participants are responsible for their own travel, transportation and accommodation expenses.
About the project

The workshop will be conducted as part of “International Mediation – Challenges and Opportunities”, a two-year research, dialogue, and policy project headed by Dr. José Pascal da Rocha, who is a lecturer with the Master of Science in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution program at the School of Professional Studies, Columbia University and a fellow with the Global South Unit for Mediation, at the BRICS Policy Center in Brazil.

The project explores innovative ways in which international organizations, donors, governments, and local non-governmental organizations conduct activities aimed at conflict prevention and management, peacebuilding and reconciliation. Its specific focus is to understand as to how mediated (stable) agreements facilitate or inhibit durable and implementable peace. Supported by the Columbia University SPS Dean’s Applied Research Grant the project engages local and international peacemakers and government and regional entities that conduct peacemaking activities with a view toward enhancing research-to-practice relationships across a wide range of levels.

The project explores the following research question: How do mediated agreements facilitate or inhibit durable and implementable peace? The project methodology includes new insights on peace operations and its linkages to international mediation efforts. It offers empirical research on peace operations conducted throughout the Global South, including regional research on Latin America, South East Asia, Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, in order to generate cross-national findings.

The study features a partnership between the BRICS Policy Center at PUC-Rio – through the Global South Unit for Mediation (GSUM); the Columbia Global Centers | Rio de Janeiro; the Centre for Conflict Studies, Philips-University of Marburg, Germany; the School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham, U.K.; and the School of Professional Studies, Columbia University in the City of New York, USA.

During the course of the project, two regional meetings will be organized to share findings and assess policy implications. The first one will be this workshop, to be held in Rio de Janeiro with a focus on Latin American experiences. The second meeting will be hosted in October 2018 in Marburg, Germany.

The final outcome of the project will result in a book, and this workshop is intended to provide qualitative input to the research.