



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 April 2016

Excellency,

The High-Level Thematic Debate on UN, Peace and Security that I will organise on 10-11 May 2016 is raising considerable interest within the General Assembly and beyond.

In addition to the short outline and provisional program annexed to my letter of 11 March 2016, I have the honour to bring to your attention today a detailed concept note.

I have asked my office to organize an informal briefing on the general preparations for this High-Level Thematic Debate. The informal briefing chaired by my Chef de Cabinet Ambassador T. Anker Christensen will take place on Thursday 28 April from 1:15 till 2:30 pm. The location will be announced in the Journal in due course.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
And Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



HIGH LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE

IN A WORLD OF RISKS:

A NEW COMMITMENT FOR PEACE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY | NEW YORK | 10 - 11 MAY 2016

Concept note

The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mogens Lykketoft, will organize a high-level thematic debate of the UN General Assembly focused on UN, peace and security, on 10-11 May 2016, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, at the UN in New York.

Background:

Over 70 years of history, the United Nations has responded to evolving peace and security challenges by developing and adopting a wide range of tools and instruments in support of Member States in order to help maintain and sustain peace.

Today, the global community is faced with increasingly complex challenges to international peace and security on the backdrop of a rapidly evolving geopolitical reality. Faced with a resurgence of important power rivalry, the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism, new forms of complex conflict especially in the Middle East, the perception of a United Nations unable to effectively address the most complicated and dangerous conflicts the world has witnessed in recent years is at risk of taking root.

While the international community has recently recommitted to multilateral approaches in the areas of development – on substance as well as on financing – and on climate change, the question is how the Organization can restore its relevance and credibility in matters of peace and security and maintaining its universal aspiration to protect and promote the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Facts show that the UN remains substantially present and engaged in many parts of the world where it continues to make crucial contributions to consolidate peace and prevent relapse into conflict. The UN remains the largest peacekeeping actor in the world with forces and contingents of variable capabilities and sophistication as well as the single most central actor in humanitarian and relief operations.

The most recent reviews¹ focused on UN peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture, and the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325(2000) on women, peace and security in particular, were all inspired by a sense that the UN needs urgently to

¹ Report of the High Level Independent on Peace Operations (A/70/95 – S/2015/446) and the Secretary-General's report on the future of UN peace operations (A/70/357 – S/2015/682), Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968 – S/2015/490), and the independent Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) as well as the Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2015/716) and the subsequent Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015).

upgrade, expand and refine its means, tools and instruments, while enhancing its diplomatic and preventive functions.

The analytical body of work behind these reviews contain significant synergies and converging recommendations – for example, regarding the need to recognize the primacy of politics; to increase investment in prevention; to strengthen the empowerment and participation of women; to advance a people-centred approach to peace and security and to strengthen partnerships in this area, particularly with regional organizations as well as civil society and the private sector.

Informed by those reviews, the high-level thematic debate will aim to offer Member States a platform to reaffirm their commitment to the Charter and purposes of the United Nations, and their determination to transform evolving challenges and threats into opportunities.

It will take place as the world is considering how best to implement the ambitious and wide-ranging 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change, and who – as the next Secretary-General – will lead the UN all those vital tasks.

Objectives:

- Engage in a strategic reflection about major trends, evolving threats and opportunities for international peace and security and steps needed to restore and buttress the relevance and credibility of the UN as a trusted and competent cornerstone of the international peace and security architecture.
- Examine the suitability of existing UN means, policies and practices available and ways to enhance the level of their efficiency in the light of the reviews, as well as the respective responsibility of the UN, more particularly the next Secretary-General, as well as Members States and beyond to implement needed responses.
- Contribute to a comprehensive stock taking of the most recent UN peace and security reviews, including the review of UN peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture review and the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and seeking ways to take high priority recommendations forward.
- Seek concrete ways for the Membership to recommit to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Format, outcome and participants

The high-level thematic debate will consist of a high-level opening followed by a high-level plenary segment where participating high-level representatives of Member States will have the opportunity to address the General Assembly on today's threat and opportunities to international peace and security, and how to navigate the changing international security landscape.

An intimate ministerial-level lunch, to which official candidates for the position of Secretary-General have also been invited, will offer an informal platform to reflect on expectations and realities regarding the role of the Secretary-General and more generally how the UN system can support Member States as the primary actors in efforts to achieve sustainable peace – internationally, regionally, nationally.

Building on a quantitative analysis and presentation of key empirical evidence from the area of peace and security as well as the recommendations from a series of coordinated, independently organized regional workshops and experts meetings, three interactive sessions will offer Ministers, distinguished guests and other participants – including representatives from the civil society and the private sector – the opportunity to deliberate on the role of the UN in *‘preventing and managing conflicts’, ‘implementation’* and *‘innovative partnerships and responses’*.

All discussions will be led by moderators in order to enhance their interactive and collaborative nature.

The outcome of the high-level thematic debate will be a President’s summary, extracting and highlighting the key conclusions from statements and interactive deliberations, as a way of communicating also the essence of these many reflections to the membership as well as the candidates for the position of Secretary General.

Observers, UN entities, civil society, research institutions, media, and other stakeholders are also invited to attend.

The agenda of the high-level thematic debate, background documents – including reports from the regional workshops and experts meetings which were organised independently in order to inform this discussion – as well as the detailed list of related events are available on the President’s webpage: www.un.org/pga/70/events/hltd-peace-and-security/