

29 September 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-level event “From MDGs to SDGs”**

Distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all.

15 years of action from national governments, international partners, and ordinary citizens has delivered enormous progress for men, women and children in developing countries around the world.

Three years of inclusive and deliberative negotiations, of analysis and discussion, has finally provided us with a new and universally applicable framework for the betterment of people and planet.

The new agenda is of course more comprehensive and more demanding than the MDGs – because ending poverty and protecting our planet does not just require progress, it requires transformation.

It requires that all countries, and indeed all actors tackle the drivers of inequalities and marginalisation; foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth without depleting our finite natural resources; and improve governance so as to protect human rights, empower women and girls and strengthen the rule of law.

It will not be easy but I am confident, particularly after this weekend, that it is absolutely possible. Now, we must focus on implementation and on transitioning from MDGs to SDGs.

In my view, there are three crucial actions which will support a smooth transition: early mobilisation, continued focus and better accountability. And as President of the General Assembly, I will do all I can to advance all three.

First, we need to ensure that the new goals are understood by everyone, owned by everyone and implemented by everyone. Governments must play a leading role in ending poverty and spearheading the shift to sustainable development. But alone, government action will not be enough. We need to build on the successful MDG partnerships and mobilise many more actors. We need to ensure that the multi-lateral development system is ready for action. We need to help a well-regulated private sector to flourish and to create policy frameworks that

make green investment the most obvious investment. We need to empower our young people, civil society and others to drive the change that's needed.

Second, we need to maintain our focus on addressing vulnerabilities. To leave no one behind, we must help those furthest behind first – whether in humanitarian situations, least developed countries, or in the global north. To address our environmental, social and economic vulnerabilities, we must take immediate action to adjust our institutions and economic development model so that an integrated long-term approach becomes the norm.

Third, to ensure that the Goals move from words on page to change in people's lives, we need openness, transparency, public engagement and robust accountability. At the national level, we need to follow the principles outlined in the 2030 Agenda and empower civil society and public institutions to monitor implementation. At the global level, we need to ensure that the HLPF and all global level review processes, add real value and work together. In this regard, I look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary General and will ensure that the General Assembly gives it appropriate consideration during this session.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is absolutely crucial that we build on the momentum of the MDGs. In this regard, I will convene an open and inclusive high level thematic event on 11-12 April, focussed on identifying early progress in implementing SDG, climate and financing commitments, and on partnerships to move matters forward.

As the saying goes, 'a good start is half the battle' – lets work together, to ensure that the transition is smooth and that the year ahead is the beginning of concerted and sustained action for people and planet.

Thank you.