

30 September 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemoration of the International Day for the Total
Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

Honorable Ministers, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to address you as we observe the International Day for the total elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The 70th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that we commemorate this year remind us of the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, just three weeks ago, I had the privilege to visit Hiroshima and to meet directly with one of hibakusha. Her name was Keiku. She was 78 years old and by some miracle her whole family survived. But the loss and suffering caused by those nuclear bombs have strengthened my resolve to use my tenure as President, to appeal to all of you to work together in the pursuit of a total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In our world today, there are more than 16,000 nuclear warheads, many on high alert status. Over the past few years, we have seen international tensions increase, tensions which could at any moment spiral out of control. In truth, so long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, we will remain forever on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe, intentional or accidental.

A world without nuclear weapons is a shared responsibility of each and every one of us. We must rebuild trust and confidence so as to avoid any missteps or accidents which could lead to nuclear war. In this regard, I pay tribute to all of the efforts of the international community to reach a global consensus on how to achieve this goal without further delay. But we can and we must work harder to overcome the profound differences across the membership, find a way to get things going and agree on how to achieve the global zero.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 2030 Agenda, agreed over the weekend, shows us what we can be done when we embrace our interdependencies and engage in meaningful and inclusive dialogue with each other, with civil society, young people and others. The recent Iranian nuclear agreement demonstrated that, concerted diplomatic efforts can and do succeed. But for that, one needs leadership, compromise and trust.

Let us bear these examples in mind as we work together in the year ahead.

I appeal to you all for your full commitment in this endeavor. I thank you.