

1 October 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the high-level thematic debate: Maintenance of International Peace  
and Security**

Distinguished guests, Honourable Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

As we commemorate the United Nations at 70, this debate is an excellent opportunity to draw lessons from past experience, to look ahead and to recommit to the UN Charter.

The desire for lasting peace was the driving force behind the birth of the United Nations 70 years ago. Peace, as you all know, is not simply the absence of conflict. It is a mind-set. And it is also about how we prevent conflicts, respond to threats and recover from them.

Over the past 70 years, the UN's approach, capacity and responsibilities in this area have undergone major changes. Yet today, with unsolved conflicts in many parts of the world and with millions of women and children greatly affected, it is clear that the UN has much more to learn and much more to do, to fulfil its mandate.

First, preventing conflict from breaking out in the first place is the epitome of success in this field – and by far the best investment in maintaining peace and security. Mediation and prevention efforts, facilitation and the use of good offices remain central tools in managing situations of instability and latent conflict.

And yet, investments in armaments and weapons continue to dwarf investments in conflict prevention. We have treaties banning biological and chemical weapons, agreements on non-proliferation, the elimination of nuclear weapons, and the Arms Trade Treaty. But still there remain simply far too many weapons in our world today. We must do more to rebuild trust and begin to move forward.

Second, since the UN was founded and the Charter adopted, the nature of security challenges, conflicts and threats have continued to change. The UN has responded and continues to adapt to these ever changing challenges. Developing – through trial and it must be said through error – crucial instruments. Military peacekeeping, missions with political and mediation mandates or the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission to mention but a few.

In this context, I commend the Secretary-General for establishing the high-level independent panel on peace operations and for sharing with Member States his implementation report. In order to stimulate appropriate consideration of this important initiative, the General Assembly will hold a plenary debate on 12 October which can offer a solid basis from which to move forward.

In addition, the on-going 10-year review of the peacebuilding architecture is timely. It will enable us to face head on the uncertainties of building and sustaining peace and the ever-present risk of lapse or relapse into conflict. Its broad focus beyond the Peacebuilding Commission will be critical given the need for comprehensive and integrated approaches in this area.

In the same vein, the global study on Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security allows us to take stock and devise ways to better address this key aspect of international peace and security.

Furthermore, given the challenges relating to ISIL, Boko Haram, Al Shabab and others, we look forward to the Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism as well as the review of the General Assembly's counter-terrorism strategy.

Third, we must work more on the synergies and nexus between our efforts.

In order to advance synergies between the three main reviews on peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and women peace and security, and to exchange views on the UN system's overall role and performance in peace and security, I will convene – on 10 and 11 May 2016 – a high-level thematic debate. Your participation and that of all stakeholders will be crucial.

A UN that is truly fit for purpose is in our common interest. It is our responsibility to ensure that the UN can respond in a timely, well-calibrated and effective manner. This requires a concrete, sustainable, and more effective budgetary framework for special political missions. And this also includes the long-standing issue of Security Council reform, which will continue to receive attention during this session.

We must also ensure greater coherence and coordination across the three pillars of the UN. As outlined in the 2005 report *In larger freedom*, “there is no peace without development, and no development without peace, and there is neither without the respect for human rights and the rule of law”. These words still resonate today and they have found true meaning in the 2030 Agenda, adopted last Friday.

Faced with new threats, including from extremist groups, the nexus between the three pillars must also be translated into action on the ground. How we protect women, children and other victims of conflict and how we deal with matters such as children in armed conflict, is of crucial importance. We must collectively prevent large-scale human rights

abuses and atrocities, before it is too late. These issues must remain at the fore of our priorities.

Finally, of course, our concern for peace, security, human rights and development must find its expression in how we respond to the current refugee crisis. As I stated at yesterday's meeting on this crisis, business as usual is not an option. Over the coming period, I intend to convene a General Assembly meeting dedicated to addressing some of the challenges in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With so much happening during this session, it is critical that we adopt a coherent and comprehensive approach to all that we do.

On this Anniversary year, we can and we must move closer to the vision of the UN Charter.

Thank you.