

2 October 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Information Briefing on Preparation for the UN General
Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to address you today.

I thank the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Executive Director Mr. Yury Fedotov, for convening this briefing on preparations for the 2016 General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem.

I also thank the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and all those actors involved in preparing the Special Session, in particular the Chair of the UNGASS Board, Ambassador Khaled Shamaa, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in Vienna and who is with us today.

Ladies and gentlemen, the world drug problem is a transnational threat that presents common challenges and shared responsibilities. It demands that people are at the center of all our efforts to address it and that we identify practical solutions to support and empower the people affected.

Drug trafficking is a multibillion-dollar enterprise, threatening societies, governments, and national and international institutions. It is fueling violence and instability in many of our societies, undermining social and economic development and the rule of law. It poses a major threat to the health, dignity and hopes of millions of people and their families.

Despite increased efforts, cooperation in addressing this problem must be strengthened and we must seek greater effectiveness and true comprehensiveness. As outlined in the UN Conventions on this matter, we are dealing with the health and welfare of humankind.

The Special Session, which will take place in less than 6 months, constitutes a unique opportunity for all of us to have an open, inclusive and wide-ranging discussion ahead of 2019, the target year for the implementation of the commitments and targets set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on this subject.

It is also an opportunity to renew global commitment and the common understandings that are essential for international cooperation in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen, just one week ago, world leaders adopted a new Agenda to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. In doing so, they recognized our ever-increasing inter-dependency, the interrelationship between the three pillars of the UN and the crucial importance of ensuring peaceful, inclusive and just societies, effective institutions and the rule of law.

That agreement must inform our thinking as we move towards this Special Session.

That agreement also demonstrates what is possible when we listen to each other and to other stakeholders and when we maintain our focus on the ultimate objective.

In the preparations for the Special Session thus far, all of you have shown similar openness and determination to finding practical solutions to the challenges facing our communities. No country, no society can deal in isolation with the transnational challenges we face.

In addition, civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this area and I look forward to their effective, substantive and active involvement during the special session.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, I count on all of you to advance discussions over the coming period. I stand ready to support, guide and stay actively involved in the process ahead and look forward to a successful Special Session in April 2016.

I thank you.