

3 October 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the General Debate**

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have reached the end of an historic nine days at the UN and an historic and comprehensive, general debate.

This year, we saw the highest number of heads of state and government ever gather here to discuss challenges and opportunities relating to global peace, security, development and human rights.

And as we commemorate the 70th anniversary, it was fitting and reassuring that leaders recalled and reaffirmed the spirit and the principles of the Charter and confirmed their faith in the central role of UN in international cooperation.

It was fitting also that the General Debate was preceded by a meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis and by the Summit where member states adopted of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a truly seminal commitment by our community of nations.

At the outset, let me thank each and every one of you for your generous words of congratulations and support. The 70th session will be an exceptionally busy one and the general debate has helped to identify the specific issues that you, the member states, feel deserve our dedicated attention.

Since the Summit focussed on sustainable development, I has suggested that the General Debate focus on the road ahead for peace and security and human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the matters most consistently raised over the past six days, was the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants right across our world. It was stressed again and again that this unprecedented crisis of global dimensions calls for an unprecedented global response rooted in international law and international solidarity.

Building on the Secretary General's meeting this week, therefore, I will attend the World Bank Group and IMF Annual Meetings of Finance Ministers in Lima next Friday. There, I will highlight both the need for immediate focus on financing SDG implementation and the even more urged need for a comprehensive financing response to the on-going

humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, in mid to late November, I will hold a meeting dedicated to the global refugee crisis.

Indeed, the tragic humanitarian emergency in many parts of the world –not least in Syria and its neighbouring countries – was highlighted repeatedly. In relation to that particular conflict, many called for a renewed effort from global and regional powers to find a necessary and peaceful political solution.

The situation in other parts of the Middle East, including the now stalled Middle East Peace process, was also highlighted as a major source of concern. Many member states also stressed the need to address the particular obstacles to peace in Africa, in part of Europe and beyond, stemming from instability, violent conflict, and the spread of extremism and terrorism.

The radical actions of ISIL, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and other extremist groups, were unanimously denounced and rejected as an affront to our common humanity.

In relation to the UN's own capacities in maintaining international peace and security, many acknowledged the SG's initiative to review UN peace operations, stressing the importance of prevention as key to preserving peace and stability and the need to address the root causes of conflict. The growing role of regional and sub-regional organisations in safe-guarding peace and security was also highlighted.

Numerous member states also highlighted the critical importance of addressing challenges relating to disarmament – ranging from threats posed by small arms and light weapons all the way to nuclear non-proliferation. In this connection, the nuclear agreement between Iran, the P5, Germany and the EU was widely recognized as an important step and a significant diplomatic achievement.

In a similar vein, many welcomed the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pressing need to reach agreement at COP21 in Paris to address climate change, was repeatedly raised by delegations – not least by small island states and others particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Indeed, since the beginning of the Summit last week, over 70 countries have submitted their INDCs. This brings to 146, the number of parties who have demonstrated their belief that Paris can and must succeed; that it can and must bring hope and opportunity to millions of people right across the globe.

Looking ahead, many leaders identified the need for a successful conclusion of the World Summit on Information Society 10 year review. They also expressed hope that the Special Session on the World Drug Problem will be able to deliver concrete outcomes.

Concerning the Sustainable Development Goals, numerous leaders recalled that universal implementation is now imperative – and that financing – including the need for developed countries to meet the 0.7% GNI target – technology and fighting corruption are essential parts of the puzzle.

In the field of health, we heard encouraging news from West Africa where the Ebola epidemic – while not yet over – has been addressed with courage and determination by the affected countries with assistance from the UN and the wider world.

In the area of human rights, some recalled the challenges in the world relating to discrimination against different groups, and to the protection of civil society space. In a similar vein, many recalled the need to make further progress in realising the rights of women and girls.

The High level review and global study on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was highlighted by many as an important process for the coming year.

Turning to organisational and institutional matter, numerous interventions stressed the pressing need for reform of the Security Council such that it can effectively fulfil its mandate and that it reflects the geopolitical realities of the world of today and.

In the same vein, hopes were expressed in relation to the holding of a transparent process over the coming year for the identification of the next UN Secretary-General.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is but a synopsis of the many issues raised these past six days. The breadth and depth of the discussions demonstrates once again that the task ahead of this Organisation is enormous.

As President of the General Assembly for this historic 70th session, rest assured that I will do all I can to help you all to make real and significant progress across each of the three pillars.

To conclude, let me express my sincere appreciation to all of the staff of the United Nations who made this week a great success. In particular, let me thank our colleagues in DGACM, the interpreters, the security, catering, maintenance staff and others. Your professionalism has been outstanding and a credit to yourselves and to this great Organisation.

I thank you.