

20 October 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the UN Security Council Annual Debate on Working Methods**

Mr. President, members of the Security Council, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor, as President of the General Assembly, to brief the Security Council during this annual debate on working methods.

I do so in full appreciation of the privilege which this opportunity affords me, as only the seventh Assembly President to address the Council in this Organization's history and as the first President in eight years time. I thank the Spanish Presidency and Ambassador Oyarzun, and to each of the Council's members for this opportunity.

We meet today as our Organization celebrates its 70th anniversary. Indeed, on Friday, we mark the entry into force of the UN Charter.

We also meet today, some three weeks after the adoption by world leaders of the 2030 Agenda – with its focus on addressing poverty and inequalities; on combatting climate change and environmental degradation; and on strengthening institutions of justice and peace – responds to the ever clearer interlinkages between this Organization's pillars of development, peace and security and human rights.

In this context, the annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council is extremely timely. Guided by the principles of transparency, inclusivity, accountability and efficiency, such a discussion is of great interest to the larger UN membership. It can also be to the benefit of the institutional relationship and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly this year, as together we bring forward the process to select and appoint the next Secretary General.

Mr. President, the relationship between the UN General Assembly and the Security Council is both mutually reinforcing and complementary.

The full UN membership, through the UN Charter, has conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that the Security Council acts on their behalf in carrying out its duties.

In addition, there are a number of areas where the actions of both the Council and the Assembly are closely linked and indeed inter-dependent. This includes certain peace and

security issues, UN Charter review, the appointment of the Secretary-General, the election of judges to international tribunals, certain recommendations from the Assembly to the Council, the Security Council annual and special reports, as well as the relations between the Security Council and certain subsidiary organs established by the Assembly.

Indeed only last week, we saw an example of this, when the General Assembly elected five new non-permanent members to the Security Council for the period 2016-2017.

During the rest of my term in office, I will continue to promote effective cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information among the Presidents of the principal organs of the UN and the Secretary General.

I especially intend to uphold the tradition of holding meetings with the monthly Presidents of the Security Council, and of staying in close contact with them on issues of common interest and joint activity.

Mr. President, given the Security Council's significant responsibilities and this mutually reinforcing relationship, it is not surprising that the working methods of the Council are of great interest and concern to the wider UN membership. This interest is even higher during those years when the next Secretary General is being appointed. We must never lose sight of the fact that, at any given moment, some 178 UN member States are not members of the Security Council, and that some 35% of the membership have never even served as Council members.

For years, there have been widespread calls for increased transparency, inclusivity and a more rigorous process in selecting the next chief of this Organization. And, through Resolution 69/321 on the revitalization of the General Assembly, the UN membership has unanimously provided clear guidance as to the way forward.

Specifically they have requested that, as General Assembly President, I and the President of the Security Council begin the process of soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General. I have already commenced the discussion on this matter with the current Security Council Presidency, and will continue to interact with the Presidency with a view to jointly circulating a letter to the membership inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner and describing the entire process.

It is also envisaged that the Presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council would jointly circulate to all Member States, on an ongoing basis, the names of individuals that have been submitted for consideration as candidates together with accompanying documents, including curricula vitae.

In addition, member states have requested that the General Assembly, without prejudice to the role of the principal organs as enshrined in Article 97 of the Charter, conduct informal dialogues or meetings with candidates, thus contributing to the transparency and inclusivity of the process.

Resolution 69/321 also underlines that whoever assumes the position of Secretary-General should be the best possible candidate – a person who embodies the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and demonstrates a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It should also be a candidate with proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations, and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills.

I am absolutely confident that there are any number of potential female candidates who come with all these credentials and more. Bearing in mind that in 70 years the UN has never had a female Secretary-General, the inclusion and consideration of woman candidates should be an important focus for all of us as we ensure that this organization continues to advance gender equality on all levels.

Finally, from the very start of this discussion, we have heard calls for the selection process to be finalized as early as possible, preferably three months prior to the assumption of office by the next Secretary-General. Speaking from my own experience last September, providing adequate time for preparation prior to assuming office is fundamental to ensuring effective discharge of responsibilities during the transition period.

Excellencies, given the critical role that the Secretary General plays in ensuring that this Organization is run as efficiently and effectively as possible, and given that the outside world increasingly expects the highest possible standards from this Organization, the process for selecting the next person at the helm must be as open and as thorough as possible. I look forward to working with you all toward this end.

Mr. President, there are three further relevant issues, regarding the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly that I wish to touch on.

First, the General Assembly receives and considers the annual and special reports from the Security Council, which, according to the Charter, shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security. This exercise represents an important aspect of the transparency and accountability that the wider membership expects vis a vis the Security Council.

While there have been improvements in the report in recent years, there have also been calls from Member States to further improve its analytical quality. This year, the General Assembly will, on 12 November, consider the Security Council report that you adopted this morning and I encourage all Member States to participate and share their views.

Second, relating to the election of the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council. In accordance with the decision on General Assembly revitalization of the 68th session, the elections of the non-permanent members of the Security Council should be conducted six months before the elected members assume their responsibilities. During this 70th session, the General Assembly will therefore hold two elections of non-permanent members – one of which, as mentioned earlier, was held just last week, and the second is scheduled for June 2016. This is a welcome development that will allow newly elected members to better prepare for their two-year term in the Security Council.

Finally, Mr. President, it would be remiss of me to conclude without addressing the issue of Security Council Reform – arguably one of the most discussed issues within the UN and beyond, over many decades. And as was underlined by a large number of world leaders during this session's General Debate, this topic is of central importance to a large majority of the Membership. The General Assembly has decided to immediately continue the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform in the 70th session and I intend to move this process forward in the coming period.

To conclude, Mr. President, one of my first decisions as President of the General Assembly was to set the theme for this 70th session. I chose to focus on the idea that this historic session could capture a new commitment to action on the part of the 193 UN member states.

Your invitation to me to brief you today is an example of such action and the beginning of what I hope will be a year of excellent cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Let me therefore once again thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to hearing Member States' statements and input to this very timely debate.

I thank you.