

3 November 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
On Agenda item [120]: Revitalization of the Work of the General
Assembly**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman, last week when celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we were reminded of the values, principles and purposes of the UN Charter.

In order to advance those purposes, however, the General Assembly's role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency must be continuously reviewed and enhanced.

In September, resolution 69/321 mandated the Ad hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly to continue its work during this 70th session. With this in mind, I recently re-appointed Ambassador Vladimir Drobniak of Croatia, and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula of Namibia to continue their work as co-chairs. I commend their efforts to date and I call upon you to extend to them your full support and cooperation.

During the last session, the Working Group focused on four thematic clusters and identified ways to enhance this Assembly, aligned with its mandate.

First, on the role and authority of the General Assembly, resolution 69/321 encouraged the implementation of resolutions and reaffirmed the relationship between the principle organs of the UN. I am working to increase cooperation, coordination and exchange of information with the presidents of the principal organs and the Secretary-General. Indeed, only two weeks ago, I briefed the Security Council during its open debate on working methods, an exercise which I feel was beneficial to both Organs. As mandated, I will also continue the practise of holding thematic debates – of which next year I will hold three – and do all I can to ensure they are results focussed.

Second, on the working methods of the General Assembly, significant progress has been made through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned between the main Committees. Since taking office, I have met with each of the chairs of the six main Committees, and we have until now had one meeting with the General Committee where we discussed issues of common interest, including the streamlining of the agenda of the General Assembly in light of the 2030 agenda and the need to efficiently manage time in the work of the Committees – a further meeting will be held in November. I have also met with the coordinators of the regional groups, and in November I am seeking to meet with them collectively to discuss ongoing business in the General Assembly. Finally, during this session, I will convene an informal meeting on enhancing cooperation between permanent missions and the Secretariat.

The third cluster considered by the Working Group relates to the selection and appointment of the next UN Secretary General. Resolution 69/321 provides clear guidance as to the way forward on this crucial issue.

In this regard, I and the President of the Security Council will circulate a joint letter to the membership inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner and describing the entire process. It is also envisaged that the names of individuals that have been submitted for consideration as candidates, together with accompanying documents, including curricula vitae, would be circulated on an on-going basis and that informal dialogues or meetings with candidates will be conducted by this Assembly. The resolution also stresses the need for the position of Secretary-General to be filled by the best possible candidate and in my view, the inclusion and consideration of female candidates will go a long way to securing that outcome.

Excellencies, the **fourth cluster** considered by the Working Group relates to the running of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, a matter which has taken on even greater significance given recent events relating to the President of the 68th session.

Last year, the General Assembly recognized that ‘the activities of the PGA have increased markedly in recent years’ and over the past two months, I have already seen evidence of this. The primary role of the President and his or her Office continues to be to officiate the meetings of the General Assembly but in reality, the work of the Office is much more extensive and includes the fulfilment of mandates set down in multiple GA resolutions.

The Presidency therefore is not just a great honor but a considerable responsibility – one that requires an Office that is adequately staffed, and run in the most effective manner possible while adhering to the highest standards of ethics and governance.

As you are aware, the office of the President is subject to a series of checks and balances including in terms of briefings to member states, audits of the regular budget and the OPGA trust fund and reporting through the GA Revitalization process etc. Like any institution, however, there is always scope for improvement and this, I believe, should be considered in further detail as a matter of priority by the Ad-hoc Working Group on GA Revitalization. I am informed that the Secretary General intends to establish an internal taskforce on this overall issue that could also be of assistance.

Consideration could, for example, be given to matters of disclosure, financial independence, staffing and reporting. Engagement with external actors is another important issue, though, given the emphasis on partnership in the 2030 Agenda, this is perhaps of relevance to the broader Organization as well.

Transparency, however, is also a matter for each and every President and from the outset I have taken a number of steps to support this objective including by carrying out regular press briefings or providing information on the staffing of my office. In addition, today, on a new transparency page on my website, I am making available an Information Note on the Office of the PGA that builds on the PGA Handbook. To further rebuild confidence, I wish also to set out to you, the membership, three principles of conduct that I and my office will adhere to during my Presidency:

First, integrity and impartiality – representing this Assembly in an impartial manner, avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring gender and geographical balance in my Office.

Second, transparency and accountability – providing information about official travel, finances and engagements; communicating openly with the membership and external audiences and complying with all relevant rules and procedures.

And third, professionalism and effectiveness – running my Office effectively and using resources efficiently; keeping appropriate records and ensuring a smooth transition to PGA 71, as was done so effectively by PGA 69.

Excellencies, on this and on the other three clusters, there is still significant scope for action and I will be listening intently to your views on how best to further revitalize the work of this Assembly.

Thank you.