

3 November 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the Third Committee Meeting on Agenda Item 65: ‘Report of the  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to  
refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian  
questions’**

Mr Chair, His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all.

It is my pleasure to join you today as you discuss the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Hilale, on your election to Chair of this Committee. I wish you, your bureau, and all the members of this Committee every success during this 70<sup>th</sup> session.

**Ladies and gentlemen**, as has been stated in this committee several times, it is by insisting on the dignity and worth of every human being, and securing their universal, indivisible and inter-dependent rights, that the UN Member States, together, will thrive.

This includes the right to express dissent or criticism, the right to peaceful assembly, to be free from torture and ill-treatment. It includes also the right to development, the right to education, food and health-care and the right to a fair trial, under an impartial rule of law – to name but a few.

We must therefore renew our commitment to promote, protect and fulfil all human rights for all people without discrimination. Realizing human rights requires action across each of the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars of the UN – something that is particularly obvious when one reads **the report under discussion from the High Commissioner for Refugees**.

With over 60 million people, half of them children, forced to leave their homes due to conflict and violence, the world has not seen a global humanitarian and refugee crisis of this magnitude since the Second World War. No country or region can address this crisis on its own and the solidarity of the international community is of critical importance.

Following discussions with Heads of State and Government during high level week as well as meetings with Ministers and multilateral banks during the Annual World Bank and IMF meetings, I will convene, on 20 November, a formal plenary meeting to consider agenda item 130 “Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum seekers”. It will be preceded by an informal meeting of the assembly on 19 November.

Together these meetings offer a unique opportunity to address not only the plight of the vulnerable people in the Mediterranean basin but also to reflect on our collective response to the larger global crisis, particularly in terms of advancing a comprehensive approach to humanitarian response.

Needless to say, it is also absolutely essential that all countries meet their obligations under international refugee law and that political solutions are found to associated conflicts and violence.

**Excellencies**, in the longer term, sustainable solutions to this crisis requires that all people enjoy prosperous, inclusive and sustainable development. In this regard, the transformative and revolutionary 2030 Agenda offers infinite scope for action.

While some may feel that the 2030 Agenda could undermine the clear and immediate obligations of human rights, I believe it can be a catalyst for governments to meet those obligations. Indeed, implementation of the Agenda itself requires that human rights are respected; that civil society and others are enabled to play their role, and that the basics of good governance, rule of law and access to justice are in place.

Moving forward, it will be important that the General Assembly particularly the second and third committees, as well as other parts of the UN, adapt to the new Agenda and its follow-up processes. It is also worth considering how the UN can build on the successful multi-stakeholder approach used throughout the Post-2015 negotiations.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** to spur early progress on implementing the 2030 Agenda, I will hold a high-level thematic debate on 12-13 July focusing on the United Nations' role in the field of human rights, including in relation to governance, the rule of law, gender equality, and institution building. Particular attention will also be placed on addressing the needs of the millions of men, women and children affected by conflicts and disasters.

To conclude, Mr Chair, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee today. Let me express my gratitude also to High Commission Guterres and all the staff of UNHCR, for their tireless efforts to address this current global refugee crisis.

I thank you.