15 December 2015

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Briefing on COP and PGA High Level Thematic Debate on the
Sustainable Development Goals (Introduction)

Mr Secretary General, Ambassador Delattre, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

What happened at the weekend was truly exceptional.

In time, it may well be judged as one of the key turning points in history.

But already, we can say that it represents a major breakthrough for multilateralism and a beacon of hope for a better future for people and planet.

On Saturday afternoon world leaders broke free of the shackles of narrow domestic concerns and embraced their moral responsibilities and ever-increasing interdependence.

In doing so, they said, in the clearest way possible, that this international community cares about its people, cares about its planet and cares about each other.

That agreement came about thanks to the collaborative actions and the incredible efforts of many people.

In particular, I wish to acknowledge the fantastic work of the French Presidency and indeed previous COP Presidents who together with the UNFCCC Secretariat and Madam Figueres, prepared the ground for this extraordinary outcome.

I acknowledge also the work of civil society activists and the private sector leaders who helped to raise the level of ambition and keep the pressure on throughout.

We also acknowledge the actions and courage of world leaders.

Without the persistent rounds of engagement from Secretary General Ban Ki Moonand without political commitments and direct engagement from all countries in and around the talks themselves, this agreement would simply not have been possible.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I congratulate and thank each and every one of them.

I will brief you shortly on my own participation in COP21 and on the links with April's High Level Thematic Debate on the SDGs.

But first I give the floor to our two briefers.

Thank you.