

13 January 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the Informal Meeting of the General Assembly – Progress of the  
Ebola outbreak response and recovery efforts**

Honorable Ministers, Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, you are all very welcome to this briefing.

In December 2013, a young boy named Emile, from the town of Guéckédou in Guinea, fell ill with fever and died two days later.

Within three weeks, his three-year-old sister Philomena, his mother Sia and his grandmother Koumba had all passed away from the same fever.

This tragedy, it is reported, marked the beginning of a devastating Ebola epidemic which led to over 28,600 cases in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and resulted in the deaths of at least 11,300 people.

In communities across each of these countries, Emile's family tragedy repeated itself again and again.

The impact of the epidemic on the affected communities and on the development prospects of the three countries themselves has been immense.

Today, we will hear from the Secretary General and other key actors in the response, on how the end of Ebola virus transmission is thankfully now within touching distance.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge the collective efforts of national authorities, local communities, health workers, ordinary citizens, civil society and the international community in getting us to this point.

This includes, the General Assembly, particularly during the 69<sup>th</sup> session under former President Sam Kutesa.

Both by generating political engagement through six dedicated meetings and by establishing the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, the Assembly demonstrated solidarity and an ability to take swift action in the face of an emergency.

As we will hear, however, the Ebola crisis is far from over – as both survivors, and the governments of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone continue to face considerable challenges

It is important therefore that the international community remain seized of this matter; that partners continue to provide support to affected communities; and that lessons are learned on how best to prevent and manage future global health crisis.

Such lessons should also feed into how we implement the SDGs – something which will be facilitated by the welcome appointment of Mr David Nabarro as Special Advisor to the Secretary General on the 2030 Agenda.

David has made a crucial contribution to the Ebola Response and no doubt, he will also be a great asset to us all as we look to secure early progress on the SDGs and Climate change this year.

Thank you.