

13 January 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Ethics for Development event**

Vice Minister of Kazakhstan, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all. Ambassador Flores, thank you very much for inviting me to address this meeting.

After three years of negotiations on the what of the 2030 Agenda, I am glad to see that today, as we begin a new year, we have increased our focus on the how – in particular on how we can implement this Agenda in the most ethical manner possible.

There have been some excellent contributions from panellists and participants alike over the past few hours, and I will not try to summarize them all.

I will, however, touch on three of the issues that were raised which are particularly important to advancing ethical implementation.

First, many emphasised the importance of integrating principles of inclusion, public participation and responsible multi-stakeholder action into all stages of SDG implementation.

This includes ethical actions from private actors such as large corporations, the international finance industry and others.

In truth, given their incredible influence, the transformation our world needs depends in no small part on these actors embracing the SDGs.

This, as we heard, means that they must be encouraged to move beyond corporate social responsibility and to incorporate the essence of the SDGs into their core business practices – into their labour, environmental protection, governance and taxation arrangements etc.

To do so, we must work with progressive alliances who understand their responsibilities and who recognize the opportunities that embracing the SDGs can bring.

Second, we heard about the importance of ensuring that implementation is built on principles of transparency and accountability.

As governments are primarily responsible for driving implementation, they must meet this responsibility in a manner that complies with international human rights law; addresses the integrated nature of the goals and encourages public ownership of the changes which the SDGs seek to bring about.

This requires the involvement of key stakeholders in regular reviews of progress and a commitment to openness, independent scrutiny and public reporting.

Other influential actors should also report on how they are contributing to realizing the SDGs.

Third, ethical implementation requires a commitment to leaving no-one behind; to as the Deputy Secretary General stated, embracing our interdependence.

This well-known mantra means that in all countries, priority should be given to addressing the needs of those furthest behind first.

It also requires, however, that the international community supports the most vulnerable countries, particularly least developed countries in their implementation efforts – in terms of development financing but also on issues such as debt, trade, technology, capacity building and taxation.

These three points are of course not new.

In signing up to the 2030 Agenda, member states already committed to embed these ethical dimensions into their implementation and follow-up and review processes.

The challenge now is to ensure that during the months and years ahead, this actually happens.

To do so, we must get off to a good start. We must build trust, support and learn from each other.

Above all, each of us must lead by example. Here at UN headquarters, for instance, we must get our own house in order.

Ambassador Oh Joon highlighted the many fora we have to review implementation of the SDGs.

Shortly, we will receive the Report from the Secretary General on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

This report could well touch on many of the ethical dimensions discussed here today.

By providing voluntary common reporting guidelines, it can support member states to integrate these dimensions into their own national review processes.

And with suggestions on how State-led reviews or private sector reporting at the High Level Political Forum could be organized, it can help maximise the effectiveness and the ethical focus of the global-level follow-up and review processes.

In all of this, we must remember that our global processes must ultimately support successful implementation at the country level.

One way of doing this is to attract global policy-makers, business leaders and others to our review fora and to use them to build greater public interest in this Agenda.

In April, I will hold a high level thematic debate on SDG and Climate implementation where I hope, as much as possible, to demonstrate how this can be done.

- how governments will benefit from engagement at the global level;
- how private actors can become part of this process in an ethical and constructive manner;
- how civil society can add significant value to our efforts;
- and how – despite the breath of this Agenda – we can maintain our focus on the most vulnerable.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, the 2030 Agenda itself – with its emphasis on inclusion and participation; on transparency and accountability, and on leaving no-one behind and addressing inequalities within and between countries – provides us with clear guidance on how to implement the SDGs in an ethical manner.

But, to do so, it is up to each and every one of us to embrace their ethical features.

And to ensure – through appropriate follow-up processes and actions at each level – that they are also embraced by those tasked with implementation.

I thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to continuing this discussion over the weeks and months ahead.