

9 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the High Level Event: “In stronger partnership and coordination
to stop Human Trafficking: Eradicating Modern-day slavery through
sustainable development”**

Mr Secretary-General, Executive Director Fedotov, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the Belarus government, the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, for organizing today's event.

As you all know, a little over one month has now passed since the revolutionary 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development came into effect.

With its focus on the most vulnerable, it is an Agenda which seeks to focus not on the symptoms but on the root causes of poverty, inequality, injustice and environmental degradation.

This comprehensive Agenda therefore demands comprehensive plans from governments and others that stay true to the holistic vision signed up to last September.

Thankfully, we are already seeing actions from governments and others translating these ambitious commitments into bold actions.

This includes action on targets which seek to eradicate human trafficking – a form of modern slavery found in every society and which blights the lives of millions, especially women and children including through sexual exploitation.

In December, the General Assembly agreed to hold a high-level meeting in late 2017 to conduct the second appraisal of the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the Assembly in 2010.

The Global Plan of Action emphasizes the need for countries to comprehensively and vigorously address human trafficking and encourages them to assess the success of these activities.

The meeting in 2017 will allow us to further strengthen our cooperation and coordination on prevention, on the prosecution of traffickers and on offering greater assistance to those who suffer most from this crime.

The Assembly's work links to the efforts of others.

Last December, the Security Council held its first discussion on human trafficking and called on countries to “criminalize, prevent, and combat trafficking in persons; and to strengthen efforts to detect and disrupt trafficking in persons.”

This includes encouraging countries to ratify and to fully implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its protocols on smuggling of migrants and human trafficking.

Funding levels including to the UN Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, must also be increased to ensure we conduct the necessary actions based on solid research and analysis.

Excellencies, the need for every nation to counter human trafficking from the same solid, international legal platform could not be more urgent.

For today, we witness the worst humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War – a crisis that leaves millions of desperate victims of conflict vulnerable to organized crime.

The international community must ensure a more comprehensive and equitable response to this crisis – one that brings the relevant conflicts to an end; that ensures humanitarian access to those most affected; and that reasserts the fundamental importance of adherence to international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

Since taking up office, the General Assembly has been seized of this crisis, with formal and informal meetings in November 2015 together with briefings on the closely related World Humanitarian Summit, including one later this morning.

Importantly, from the perspective of human trafficking, the General Assembly will hold a high level meeting in September to address large movements of refugees and migrants.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the sustainable development goals demand that we join together in partnership and cooperation to support people and communities everywhere.

Through these goals we have made a solemn promise that must be honoured in comprehensive and effective action. Such work includes the elimination of human trafficking, migrant smuggling and violence against women and children.

Let us live up to this pledge, and by doing so, let us create the peaceful and inclusive societies that are foundations for lives of human rights, security and prosperity.

Thank you.