

10 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the informal meeting to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the
ACABQ**

Mr Secretary General, Ms Susana Mallorca, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Excellencies, Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

You are all very welcome to this informal meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

This 70th session has provided us with many opportunities to reflect on the work of the United Nations, both past, present and future.

Today, we bring that focus to the work and achievements of the ACABQ.

From the very beginning, the General Assembly recognized the need to establish a mechanism to ensure that funds entrusted to the United Nations by Member States are used in an effective and efficient manner.

And on 13 February 1946, at its 31st plenary meeting, the General Assembly decided to institute the ACABQ as its subsidiary body responsible for providing expert examination and advice on all administrative, budgetary, and financial matters.

At the time of its establishment, the ACABQ comprised only nine individual experts, and the annual budget for the United Nations stood at just \$19 million.

Today, the number of ACABQ individual experts has almost doubled while the resources it examines has increased to an incredible \$10.6 billion.

Despite this dramatic evolution, the Advisory Committee has time and again proven its ability to perform complex tasks under increasingly high pressure and against tight deadlines.

Having served as Minister of Finance for seven years, I can personally attest to the importance of financial oversight and relate to the invaluable work of the Advisory Committee.

It is detailed and painstaking, and truth be told, not always appreciated by delegates who are eager for both a quick response and, as they see it, the right response!

But with citizens around the globe demanding clear answers about how their tax dollars are being spent, and in a world where challenges increasingly require a multi-lateral response, the work of ACABQ is becoming more not less important.

Indeed, a proper functioning Advisory Committee goes hand in hand with a proper functioning United Nations.

It is a crucial part of effective UN action to meet the Sustainable Development Goals; to improve the performance of UN peace operations; to strengthen human rights protection and to improve the overall functioning of the UN and its principal bodies.

Let me therefore extend my sincere appreciation to the Committee's members and thank them and the Secretariat, for their continued commitment during this 70th session.

Thank you.