

10 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the informal Interactive Stakeholder  
Consultation in support of the preparatory process towards UNGASS  
2016**

Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

You are all very welcome to this Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation in support of the preparatory process for the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem.

As I have expressed previously, as the only Special Session of the 70<sup>th</sup> session, UNGASS is a major event on the 2016 General Assembly calendar.

As a transnational threat, the world drug problem presents common challenges and shared responsibilities for all member states – indeed for all actors.

It is a problem that can destroy lives, often of society's most vulnerable.

It can tear families and communities apart.

It can pit drug user against drug supplier; and it can pit both of these against law enforcement.

It can even pit countries where drugs are produced against countries where drugs are predominantly consumed.

And it touches on a series of issues such as human rights, social cohesion, sustainable development, criminal justice and international law and diplomacy.

In this regard, the world drug problem is the epitome of a twenty-first century global problem.

And, as we have seen with climate change and the SDGs, global problems of this nature require long term engagement within and across borders, action at different levels which address all aspects of the problem; and action by government and a series of other actors.

That is why I have been greatly encouraged to see that preparations for the special session have been advanced in an open and inclusive manner.

Over the past two days, for instance, the annual United Nations Inter-Parliamentary Union brought a parliamentary contribution to the preparatory process for UNGASS 2016.

Today's consultation, taking place just over two months out from the Special Session, is the opportunity for you – for civil society, non-governmental organizations, the academic and scientific community, youth groups and the private sector and other stakeholders – to do likewise.

Your input specifically on the two major themes before you – Drugs and Health; and Drugs, Human Rights, Community and Development – can enrich and help guide the negotiation process that is underway in Vienna.

This is particularly the case today, given that we are joined by Ambassador Shamaa, Chairperson of the Board, which is tasked by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) with the preparations of the special event; and also by UNODC Executive Director Mr Yury Fedotov.

I therefore encourage you all to engage as openly, frankly and concisely as possible, so that all views are heard.

I wish you all successful deliberations and I will return towards the end of your meeting to discuss the key messages coming out of your discussion.

Thank you.