

16 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the event “The Value of Hosting Mega Sport Events as a Social,  
Economic and Environmental Sustainable Development Tool”**

*Statement by UN General Assembly Vice-President on behalf of H.E. Mr Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70th session of the General Assembly*

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement today on behalf President Mogens Lykketoft, who is travelling on official business at this time.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Qatar, Korea, Russia, Tunisia and all relevant organizations and stakeholders and athletes, for their continuous efforts to promote understanding and achieve sustainable peace through sports.

Sport has enjoyed a privileged practice of promoting peaceful international relations, as states participate together without conflict regardless of the geopolitical differences.

The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development adopted by World Leaders in September last year granted landmark recognition to sports as “an important enabler of sustainable development”.

As I have mentioned previously, this year it is important to lay the ground for successful implementation of this agenda.

Member States and others, therefore, must begin to develop national and international plans that respond to the SDGs in a holistic and integrated manner.

This includes actions that promote peaceful and inclusive societies and conflict resolution. In this regard, sport can play an important role.

At a micro level, everyone should have access to sport.

Sport can promote positive values allowing individuals to gain skills, set goals, exercise leadership, build resilience and work as part of a team.

And sports programs have often served to include men, women and children who are vulnerable

or who face discrimination – from migrants and refugees to persons with disabilities; from persons living with HIV/AIDS to homeless people and those who have suffered in conflict.

At the macro level, mega sports events can be hugely beneficial to host countries but also more broadly.

Events such as the Olympics or the soccer world cup have time and again demonstrated their power to bring us all together; and to show the world that people everywhere are more alike than not.

These events can also help spur sustainable development – promoting diversity and gender equality; encouraging investment in healthcare, education, infrastructure and sustainable cities; contributing to peaceful, inclusive and non-violent societies.

And they can help to develop local leadership and community resources which in turn can contribute to open, prosperous and peaceful societies.

We must however be mindful of the fact that unless prepared and executed in an inclusive and effective manner, such events can also have negative impacts – placing pressure on public finances or giving rise to negative environmental and social impacts.

The Olympic Movement is well placed to manage such risks and to help ensure that these events deliver the maximum benefit for all involved and inspire commitment and action from key actors.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Olympic Summer Games and the 15<sup>th</sup> Paralympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in August and September this year will be a wonderful opportunity to do just that.

I wish you all fruitful discussions during today's meeting and I urge all member States to consider how best to utilize sport, including mega sports events, as instruments for sustainable development.

Thank you.