

22 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, good morning.

I regret that I was not able to be at the opening of this session last week though I am grateful that Ambassador Moses of Nauru delivered a statement on my behalf.

I was however keen to speak to you directly given the importance of the issues you are addressing this session.

Ladies and gentlemen, since taking office, it has become clear to me that as multilateralism is re-asserting itself in relation to sustainable development, regrettably, in the area of international peace and security, the opposite appears to be happening.

The continued escalation of violence in many parts of the world, particularly in Syria, and the magnitude of the global humanitarian and refugee crisis, expose some glaring weaknesses at the heart of the systems and tools that we, the international community, have developed these past 70 years.

Weaknesses that mean that we have been incapable:

- Of preventing tensions from escalating into all out conflict;
- Of protecting the lives of innocent civilians;
- Of securing access for basic humanitarian assistance;
- Of producing and sustaining a massive humanitarian response
- And of facilitating a peaceful political settlement.

And other threats, particularly violent extremism and terrorism which are now at the top of the global agenda, present us all with a series of other challenges – which on the face of it, the international community seems ill-prepared to address.

In this context therefore, and as the UN celebrates its 70th anniversary, it is fitting that a series of UN reviews are underway in the area of peace and security.

These reviews – on UN peace operations, peacebuilding and on women, peace and security – coupled with the process for selecting and appointing the next UN Secretary General, are genuine opportunities to reassert effective multilateralism in this sphere.

But what exactly is it that needs to change?

There is no doubt that the UN Security Council has been unable to fulfil its mandate in recent years.

But the UN's response to Peace and Security goes far beyond the Security Council, as this Committee knows only too well.

A pattern is emerging from the different reviews, for example, regarding the need to recognize the primacy of politics; to increase investment in prevention; to advance a people centred approach to peace and security and to strengthen partnerships in this area, particularly with regional organizations – and to achieve all this, to enhance the level of flexibility in addressing budgetary and management issues.

On 10-11 May, I am convening a high-level thematic debate where I am inviting Ministers to provide their views on these and others issues which are needed for a new deal in the area of peace and security.

This debate is an opportunity to communicate clearly to the candidates for the position of UN Secretary General – who will all be invited to attend – the kind of improvements and changes that member states expect of the UN itself in the coming years.

The C34 will have completed its important work on the peacekeeping dimensions of the peace operations review by then. I hope that it will pave the way for a more focused debate on that occasion.

For this to happen, it is crucial that all delegations demonstrate political commitment, compromise and flexibility to ensure consensus on the recommendations emanating from this committee.

I understand that delegations have submitted a very large number amount of important texts and proposals.

And that preparations for this session have been conducted in a very good team spirit.

Over the next three weeks, I encourage you all to continue this good spirit; this positive engagement and your excellent cooperation with the representatives from Nigeria and Canada, so that these negotiations reach as successful an outcome as possible.

Thank you.