

29 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the opening ceremony of the calligraphy exhibition “Human
Rights in the Culture of Islam” of Qatar**

H.E. Seikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this opening ceremony today and I congratulate the Permanent Mission of Qatar and the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar for this impressive and informative exhibition.

Today, it is very regrettable that we see many misconceptions associated with Islam, which is, as we know, a religion of peace and tolerance practiced by 1.6 billion people around the world.

It is also deeply concerning that we see those misconceptions and indeed irresponsible rhetoric about Islam, feeding into a rise of xenophobia in some parts, including in a way that is targeting refugees and migrants.

As illustrated by this exhibition, human rights are universal values which put human dignity first. This exhibition also reminds us the importance of cultural exchange and art in addressing global issues.

And it demonstrates, that if we are to address the many challenges facing our world today, then human rights, tolerance and respect for each other must be at the centre of our collective efforts.

Thank you.