

29 February 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the annual high-level panel discussion on human rights
mainstreaming: “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and
human rights, with an emphasis on the right to development”**

Mr President, Mr. Secretary-General, High Commissioner, Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to join you for this discussion .

Since taking up office last September, I have made securing early progress on our great Sustainable Development Goals my number one priority.

For this to happen, however, the SDGs must move out of the corridors of the UN in New York and become truly global goals – owned by governments, owned by citizens, owned by all of us.

I am therefore delighted to see the SDGs high on the agenda of those responsible for issues at the heart of those goals.

Human rights is certainly one of those issues.

In fact, the 2030 Agenda is a testament to the influence of the Right to Development and the two international covenants we mark this year.

It reinforces the legal obligations that member states signed up to these past 70 years.

It recognises that freedom from want and freedom from fear must be tackled together, rejecting head on the notion of growth first, civil and political rights later.

It has empowerment and participation at its core –recognizing the capabilities of all people; the rights of all to participate fully in society and the need for inclusive politics and governance.

It places significant emphasis on accountability – recognizing the primary responsibility of national governments for their own development; calling for openness and transparency in review process at all levels.

And it has equality at its very core.

Equality within countries by prioritizing those further behind first; committing to reduce inequalities and fight discrimination; to empower women and girls; and to ensure that the benefits of economic development are shared across society.

And equality between countries, as it recognizes the responsibilities of wealthier nations to support the most vulnerable, particularly least developed countries; and it includes a series of actions to create the international order called for by the Right to the Development – including on development assistance, international taxation and global economic governance issues.

Now, as we move to implementation, we must ensure further alignment with human rights.

Governments and others must look to international human rights standards for guidance when designing implementation plans and programmes.

We must also ensure that the integrated nature of the agenda is not lost in the translation from global to national levels – the SDGs must not be implemented *à la carte*.

And we need to build an infrastructure for effective accountability that is based on the principles outlined in the Agenda.

At the international level, this means getting the High Level Political Forum to deliver on its promise, including by drawing on and informing the work of UN human rights mechanisms.

And I look forward also to learning more about the potential role of the Human Rights Council and the various Treaty Bodies in this area.

To conclude, Excellencies, last September world leaders agreed to an ambitious, indeed, what I call, a revolutionary Agenda.

They did so because they understood that this is what billions of people and our suffering planet desperately need.

It is time therefore to get going with the business of implementation.

I encourage everyone here today to think hard about how you will contribute and how will you commit to SDG implementation.

That is what I will be asking participants at High Level Thematic Debates I will hold at the General Assembly on 21 April and on 12-13 July focusing on SDGs and Human Rights respectively.

I encourage the human rights community to actively engage in those meetings, so as to drive forward rapid and ethical implementation of the SDGs.

Thank you.