

5 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the opening of the Informal GA Briefing on the reports and  
allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving international  
forces in the Central African Republic**

I call to order the informal meeting of the plenary to brief Members on reports and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving international forces in the Central African Republic.

I warmly welcome you all to this meeting.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Under Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General; the Under Secretary-General for Field Support, and the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, today, we address an extremely serious and troubling issue.

I am appalled by the deeply disturbing accounts contained in last week's reports and allegations.

Such acts are unacceptable under any circumstances.

But when allegations point to UN personnel or soldiers deployed in UN missions whose job is to protect civilians from harm, then it is particularly shocking, outrageous and unacceptable.

What we need now are prompt, thorough and transparent investigations to establish the facts and ensure proper and swift accountability.

Such action is essential for the victims, whose immediate needs must be addressed as a matter of priority.

It will also be welcomed by the UN-personnel and soldiers around the world who are committed to furthering the UN's values and whose reputation and integrity is tarnished by the acts of but a small few.

In recent times, the UN and its Member States have taken a series of steps to address this issue.

As recently as last month, the Security Council expressed its deep concern regarding such allegations through resolution 2272.

And the Secretary-General has continuously sought to strengthen his response as reflected in his zero tolerance policy and in the numerous reports dedicated to this topic and recently also by appointing a Special Coordinator, Jane Holl Lute – who has joined us here today.

Still, when new allegations emerge, we need to consider if collectively and individually; troop and police contributing countries and all 193 UN member states alike, we are doing everything we can to stop such acts from ever happening again.

We must not settle for anything less.