

5 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the opening of the Save the children event on ‘From agreement to
action: delivering the SDGs’**

Good morning Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today as we mark the end of the first 100 days of the 2030 Agenda.

I am very pleased that Save the Children has taken the initiative to organize this event in the weeks leading up to my High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the SDGs on 21st April and the Paris Agreement signing ceremony on 22nd April.

After the first 100 days, we take stock: what has been done and what still remains to be done?

Well the latter question is quite easy, because the answer is “A LOT”.

With the transformative 2030 Agenda, the world and all the UN Member States set out on an ambitious path towards sustainable development.

But reaching our great Sustainable Development Goals will not be easy.

It will require unprecedented action and commitment from all actors, especially if we are to make one of the most repeated promises and ‘catch phrases’ a reality: to leave no-one behind.

The new report by Save the Children sets out a ten-point plan for overall implementation.

This plan is addressed to all actors that will need to come together – work together – to achieve the SDGs.

Of course, Governments have the primary responsibility for these goals.

Rich and poor countries alike must now review their national strategies and plans and determine what must change and where resources and policies must focus to deliver on the major shifts behind the goals.

Wealthier countries must also look beyond their own shores and live up to their development finance, tax, trade, debt, policy and other commitments and support the developing world – especially the most vulnerable countries.

The UN – as this plan points out – also has a crucial role to play.

While the UN must support countries across the 17 goals, in my view, it can add real value two specific areas.

The first is, of course, leaving no-one behind and reaching those furthest behind.

With the Millennium Development Goals we achieved a lot but too often, we failed to reach the most vulnerable. Now, we need to reach higher – aim higher.

Through its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, a united and coherent UN can work with governments, international partners and others to give real meaning to these concepts.

It must support governments to place specific focus on addressing inequalities, empowering women and girls and supporting vulnerable groups – such as children.

It must provide analysis and support when designing and executing plans, policies and programmes; when investing in public institutions and when strengthening their data systems.

The UN, together with other actors, must also drive the commitment to accountability, to follow-up and to learning that is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

To keep the momentum going, to see how we are progressing and to learn from each other, we must review our progress and our actions at the national, regional and local levels.

This must start at the national level, where the first step towards accountability is openness and participation in the preparation of national responses to the SDGs.

The next step is the setting out of clear commitments and timelines for when progress will be reviewed and how.

Only with such actions can the global level review processes which will culminate at the High Level Political Forum, deliver on its potential.

In this area, thankfully, we are already seeing progress.

Just last month, of course, the UN Statistical Commission agreed on a global indicators framework, which, though perhaps not perfect, is a key step towards measuring progress at all levels.

These days Member States and other stakeholders have also started the discussion on clarifying and finalizing certain aspects of the follow-up and review framework, in a process co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Denmark and Belize.

I encourage you all to engage in that process for it is key that we get things up and running here in New York in a way that delivers the best possible support-framework for effective SDG implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we look forward to the remainder of this first year of implementation, we must all ask ourselves what it is that we will contribute?

How will you commit to achieving the SDGs?

What will you do to ensure that the children born this year, the teenagers of 2030, will inherit a better world? Will be empowered to live their full potential?

If you have asked the question, but come up empty handed then the debate and discussion today will hopefully provide you with some ideas.

I therefore wish you all a fruitful discussion and hope to see many of you at the High-level Thematic Debate on the 21st of April.

Thank you.