

7 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the event “Ending Human Trafficking by 2030: The role of global
partnerships in eradicating modern slavery”**

Archbishop Auza, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me begin by thanking the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See for inviting me to speak at this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my first two weeks in Office, I had the great honor to welcome Pope Francis to the United Nations.

During that visit, he spoke with such passion, conviction and clarity about the changes needed to bring peace to our world; to ensure dignity and justice for the world’s vulnerable; and to demonstrate that we cherish the planet upon which our survival depends.

He set the tone for the Summit which followed – one that underscored the profound change in mindset needed to transform our world by 2030.

His letter just now sets a similar tone.

Trafficking, as you know, affects virtually every country in every region of the world.

Between 2010 and 2012, victims of trafficking with 152 different citizenships were identified in 124 countries – a figure that is likely to much higher.

The invisible crime of trafficking is present in many walks of life .

It is present in the sex industry where women and young girls are held in debt bondage; in the construction sector where thousands of workers are abused, deceived and held against their will; and on fishing boats where victims are isolated and exploited for long periods of time.

It is present in brothels and private homes to which girls and young women have been sent or lured with promises of a better life; on cocoa farms, made profitable through almost zero-cost labour of child workers; and in the houses and apartments of wealthy people where maids sleep on the floor and are not allowed outside.

Slavery is one of the most exploitative practices that may constitute the end purpose of trafficking and today's event represents an opportunity for the international community to join forces with all those who wish to address such crimes.

The context in which all of this is happening is clear: a world of winners and losers; a world of immense power imbalances; a world that is unjust, unequal and unsustainable.

Action is desperately needed to address these imbalances and the 2030 Agenda provides us with the perfect framework to do so.

I therefore encourage you all to use this meeting today to build alliances; to strengthen the application of the international legal framework aimed at addressing trafficking; to identify how to increase support for victims of trafficking and to understand better the linkages between addressing human trafficking and meeting the SDGs.

Through these goals, world leaders, faith leaders and civil society leaders have made a solemn promise that must be honoured.

Let us live up to this pledge, and by doing so, let us create the peaceful and inclusive societies that are the foundations for human rights, human dignity and shared prosperity.

Thank you.