

20 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 Ministerial Level Dinner Discussions  
on climate change and SDGs implementation**

Good evening everyone, you are all very welcome to New York.

I want to thank our friends in WRI and the Mission of the Netherlands for inviting me to participate here this evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, you in this room, leaders from governments, business and civil society, worked together for years to reach two historical agreements that will – hopefully – forever change our common future.

And last week, while chairing the General Assembly dialogues with candidates for the position of UN Secretary-General, it was reassuring to see questions regarding the implementation of those agreements feature so prominently.

After incredible negotiating breakthroughs, however, promises must now turn into meaningful action.

We have to demonstrate that achieving the SDGs is not only possible but inevitable. That it is an existential necessity.

But progress on the SDGs will only happen if it is done in lock-step with action on climate change.

If global warming accelerate, it will cause enormous waves of forced migration and connected conflicts, and it will swallow up all the resources we could hope for to eradicate poverty.

As an economist and former finance minister, I see that it is good business to ensure action on these agendas is as aligned as possible.

After all, catastrophic climate change is bad for business and bad for investment, and so too are unequal, unjust, and unstable societies.

A united approach to implementation – to ending poverty, supporting shared prosperity, building peace and justice, and transitioning to low carbon-climate climate resilient economies – however, will not happen on its own.

I am sure we all realize, that it will require strong action at the local, regional national and international levels.

It will demand:

- Adapting national plans and policies to respond to both the SDGs, the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions and the needed additions to those in order to stabilize global temperature at less than 2 degrees increase.
- Coordinating actors at national and local levels and building partnerships for investment in renewable energy, energy saving and over all sustainable infrastructure
- Mobilizing public financial resources through a successful internationally coordinated fight against tax evasion and other illicit financial flows
- Making sure that governments in old and new rich countries meet the various means of implementation commitments, from the \$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020 and official development assistance, to technology and capacity building.
- Ensuring that UN support to Member States, UN follow up and review mechanisms and UN engagement in partnerships responds to the full SDG agenda including climate.

Thank you.