

20 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the opening of the event on Global Drug Control System and the
Sustainable Development Goals' Agenda**

Thank you Madam Moderator.

And thank you President Dreifuss and the Global Commission on Drug Policy and fellow organizing partners for inviting me speak at this important event.

Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

For those of you who have travelled far and wide to join us in New York this week, you are very welcome.

I will try to be brief because so early in the morning, I don't believe that anyone wants to listen to a long speech.

There are in my view five major areas of overlap between the Global Drug Control System as addressed by the UNGASS Outcome Document and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

First, they both share some fundamental operational principles: An emphasis on dignity, justice and human rights; on protecting the most marginalized, on taking a people centred approach and on empowering those whose lives we seek to improve.

Second, while both areas require national action and national ownership, both also require international cooperation.

Today, our world is even more connected, power is even more diffusely held and people are demanding global action to a much greater extent than when this Organization was founded 70 years ago.

Third, each of these frameworks stress the urgent need to listen to the voices of youth, and to tackle gender inequality and discrimination, particularly in communities that are saddled with extreme poverty.

Fourth, both agreements call on countries to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to major challenges – buzzwords that, in simple terms, mean that we should look at the entire picture, at the root causes, the range of impacts, and the range of factors that contribute to both the problems and the solutions.

And fifth, both agreements emphasize the critical importance of involving a whole range of actors in implementation – civil society, the private sector, faith groups, service providers, researchers, academics, the UN and others.

With such common features, the main question for this morning's meeting is how, in practice, we will connect the recommendations of the UNGASS outcome document, the plan of action to be negotiated starting in 2019, and the SDGs agenda.

This is a challenge.

But in my view the solution lies in understanding the 2030 Agenda as the overarching framework which can inform our work across all of the Goals and targets and all other international agreements, like the UNGASS Outcome Document.

And, as was mentioned by one of the Secretary General candidates at hearings just last week, on such complex issues, it is essential that we break down traditional silos, not just through policy coordination but through specific programmes at the country level aimed at implementation.

To conclude I want to stress again: the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without significant progress on the world drug problem – and neither will be achieved without leadership, innovation, political commitment, resources and urgent multi-stakeholder action.

I thank you.