

21 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 High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the  
Sustainable Development Goals**

Heads of State and Government, Mr Deputy Secretary-General, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, you all very welcome here today.

A little over six months ago, many of you gathered in this very hall to embrace the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It was a moment of genuine hope in a world beset by crises – hope that was built on in Paris through an incredible breakthrough on climate change.

Together, these two agreements delivered a clear message to the world: that a transformation has begun which will ensure both shared prosperity and the vitality of our planet.

Through the SDGs, you committed to end the moral outrage of global poverty and hunger.

And to reform economic systems, fight gender inequality and give everyone a fair chance at life.

You committed to move towards renewable energy and responsible consumption and production to save our environment.

And to build more inclusive, transparent and effective institutions that will protect all human rights and advance more peaceful, more just societies.

To do all of this, you committed to a framework of accountability and a revitalized and equitable global partnership – one in which governments work with each other, the private sector, the UN, multi-lateral banks, civil society and their own people, to drive this transformation.

Since making those commitments, world events have underlined even further the need for urgent action.

Violent extremists – driven in part by exclusion and a sense of hopelessness – have destroyed the lives of thousands right around the world.

Violent conflicts – often fuelled by abuses of power, resource competition, and the impacts of climate change – are threatening the lives of millions.

And an inadequate response to a global humanitarian and refugee crisis is undermining human rights, global solidarity and the very concept of leaving no-one behind.

Reports this week of yet another truly horrific human tragedy in the Mediterranean sea are deeply disturbing and our thoughts are with all those who right now are grieving the loss of loved ones.

Excellencies, the Paris, New York, Addis and Sendai agreements together provide us with a solid framework to address the root causes of such crises.

But this will only happen if they are implemented with urgency; if we build on the foundations laid by the MDGs and if we manage the opportunities before us for the benefit of all.

Over the course of today, we will look at five key areas that I hope will help us move from the what to the how; from what needs to change to how we will make change happen.

We will demonstrate that all hands are on deck.

First, **countries will show how you are responding to the SDGs**; how you are reviewing national plans, strategies and budgets; how you are establishing institutions and policies that will balance the short term interests with long term interests and underpin change across government, the private sector and consumer behaviour.

Second, we will look at **how to move money and markets to support the SDGs** – how to increase domestic resources and ensure everyone pays their fair share, not least through successfully eradicating tax evasion and tax havens; how to ensure investors and companies align their instruments and their practices; how to ensure donors meet their ODA commitments; and how to create the legal and policy environment, including tax frameworks, that will drive a surge in green investment – investment that will benefit people, the planet and business too.

Third, we will consider how to **transition from partnerships for the MDGs to partnerships for the SDGs**, scaling up existing partnerships and inspiring new ones; providing new opportunities for public-private engagement; and ensuring those partnerships are aligned with national priorities.

Fourth, we will focus on **new technologies for the SDGs**; on the environment needed for their creation, diffusion and use; on the capacity needed to ensure poor people benefit from them; and on the **systems needed to collect and use data** to ensure nobody is left behind.

And finally, in advance of tomorrow's historic Climate signing ceremony, we will look at how **climate action can help deliver on the entire SDGs** and vice-versa, not just in theory but in practise too.

Excellencies, action now can create pathways out of our current crises and begin the transformation that our world desperately needs – a transformation that is good for people and planet; one that creates opportunities for citizens and business; one that advances peace and prosperity.

But if we fail, the consequences will be felt for generations – centuries.

The choice is yours.

You, the global political, business and civil society leaders can kick-start SDG implementation.

You can catalyse ambitious and immediate actions at all levels.

You know how to make this transformation happen.

Thank you.