

26 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 Commemorative meeting of the General  
Assembly in observance of the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl  
catastrophe**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, today we mark 30 years since the Chernobyl nuclear accident, the most severe accident in the history of the nuclear power industry.

It caused a huge release of radio-nucleoids over large areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, devastating the region's mostly rural economy and uprooting more than 300,000 people.

Livelihoods lost almost 30 years ago have yet to recover fully and many affected are still struggling to overcome poverty, exclusion and the stigma of contaminated regions.

Today, we remember the human cost of the disaster.

We remember those who sacrificed their own lives to prevent this disaster from becoming even worse.

We take stock of the many problems that still linger.

We look ahead towards solutions that hold promise for the affected communities

And we renew our commitment to a safer future.

Let us acknowledge the Governments of the three countries most affected by Chernobyl — Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine — for working to protect the affected populations from the effects of radiation, to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to build a better future for the communities.

The General Assembly and the United Nations Development Programme – as co-ordinator of all UN activities related to the Chernobyl accident these past ten years – have also played an important role.

This year, along-side this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we also mark the end of the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development for Chernobyl-affected Regions.

A series of activities are taking place in the affected countries included a high level conference in Minsk which began yesterday and a photo exhibition entitled “Chernobyl, tragedy, lessons, hope” is on display in the UN Secretariat building.

These activities will be followed by a report from the UN Secretary-General and action during the 71<sup>st</sup> session from the General Assembly.

Moving forward, we must continue to demonstrate international solidarity so that those most affected by this accident will be able to recover to the fullest.

Thank you.