

10 May 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the High Level Thematic Debate on Peace and Security In a World
of Risks – a New Commitment for Peace**

Honorable Ministers, Mr. Deputy Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,
In 1945, the United Nations was founded with one overriding objective:

‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’

Today, 70 years later, we reflect on the times the UN has succeeded and failed in meeting that objective and we look to determine how it can do better, both today and into the future.

As an organization that was born into a very different world than we have today, the UN has, in some respects, delivered quite well.

It has provided a framework which has helped restrain the world’s largest powers.

It has mobilized hundreds of thousands of peacekeepers and billions of dollars for peace operations. It has established a clear legal framework for the conduct of war and the protection of human rights; and helped reduce the risks posed by the world’s deadliest weapons.

Of all of this, we should be proud.

But, in other well-known instances, regrettably, the UN has performed very poorly.

Despite significant advancements following the end of the Cold War; in Srebrenica, Somalia and Rwanda, when the United Nations was perhaps needed most, it failed abysmally.

Since then, the UN’s approach has evolved to help it respond more rapidly to potential massacres and to conflicts that have become increasingly localized or internal in nature.

Yet, from the wars that involve regional and even sometimes major powers directly – or by proxy in the Middle East and North Africa to the impunity for violations of international humanitarian law; from the terrorism that is wreaking havoc in many of your countries to the tens of thousands of women and children, who continue to suffer sexual violence in conflict – even at the hands of

international forces who are there to protect them. . . . from all of this, it is clear that the UN remains ill-equipped today to meet its overriding objective.

On this anniversary year, however, following the recent reviews on peacebuilding, peace operations and women, peace and security, we have an opportunity to fundamentally change this reality.

And thankfully we are in a good moment for multilateralism.

The 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement provide us with a framework to advance a more peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and sustainable world.

And the Iranian Nuclear deal and Security Council action on Syria last December, provide proof that, however belatedly, the UN can still help global and regional powers to resolve their differences.

The challenge now is to build on this momentum and to respond to the overarching recommendations from the three reviews.

Those recommendations are clear.

To respond to today's and tomorrow's threats to peace and security, the United Nations must become more relevant, more credible, more legitimate and more capable. For major, regional and local powers alike.

During the next two days, Excellencies, we have an opportunity to identify specific steps, including for the next UN Secretary-General, to make that happen.

For many of you, this of course includes making the UN Security Council more effective and more representative, and I share this view.

But today, I would like us to focus on other issues that emerge very strongly from these reviews.

First and foremost, on the need for political solutions to inform every aspect of the UN's approach to sustaining peace.

As in the area of medicine, it is more cost-effective and more humane to invest in prevention before a cure is needed.

But to put prevention at the heart of our peace and security architecture, we need to forge a consensus on a crucial set of budgetary, institutional, cultural reforms.

This includes ensuring that the UN works more seamlessly across its three pillars while operationalizing the much talked about people-centered approach.

Second, the global study paints a grim picture of progress on implementing Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Now is the time for specific actions and leadership to move this Agenda forward.

As we revitalize the entire UN peace and security approach, we must ensure that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into that overall approach and that women are more involved in both preventing and resolving conflicts.

Third, on partnership, the reviews encourage the UN to improve how it works with other key actors in this area.

Here, we must give greater attention to securing strategic partnerships with regional organizations in a way that leverages the best of both actors.

We also need to find ways to provide opportunities for greater involvement to those member states who wish to play greater roles in global peace and security.

And we need to strengthen relations with actors like the World Bank and other actors in the financial and private sector that can contribute to building stable and prosperous societies with jobs. **And fourth**, from cybercrime to climate change, from epidemics to global terrorism – changes are needed to ensure the UN is better equipped to deal with both new and emerging threats.

Tackling terrorism and preventing violent extremism, in particular, is an area where the UN's role needs greater attention and coordination. This is especially the case, when engaged in operations or mediation in conflict situations with a significant terrorism or insurgency dimension.

To conclude, Excellencies, Albert Einstein once said that 'Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.'

I hope that through your input, our expert speakers and the preparatory work conducted by academics, think tanks and civil society; this event can help advance a common understanding that enables the UN, now and into the future, to deliver on that one overriding objective.

Thank you.