

20 May 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
On International Vesak Day**

Statement by to the General Assembly Vice-President, H.E. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, on behalf of President of the UN General Assembly His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft

Excellencies, Religious leaders. Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the UN General Assembly His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft.

It is a joy to be amongst you today in the marking of the Vesak International Day celebrations. Please allow me to extend my appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Thailand and the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka for co-hosting this auspicious day for Buddhists worldwide.

Buddha taught us that nothing exists in isolation.

All phenomena in the universe exist within the context of mutually supportive relationships.

With this in mind, nothing exists without meaning.

Nothing is wasted.

Interweaving these ‘threads’ of interdependence, the universe has brought forth and nurtured life, including human life, on this planet.

These words of wisdom transcend time, and carry great relevance in our common endeavours today to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

The United Nations, since its inception, has worked for the betterment of humanity through its efforts to maintain international peace and security, uphold human rights and foster sustainable development.

Buttressing all its efforts is the promotion of understanding, tolerance, respect and dialogue between and among diverse cultures, civilizations, faiths and peoples.

In many ways, these are now prerequisites for achieving many of the goals that the UN, and indeed, we as human beings, aspire to today.

As this most sacred day in Buddhism is commemorated by hundreds of millions globally, Vesak reflects on a faith that is characterized by tolerance, harmony and assimilation.

Therefore, today, I call upon you to heed the wise words of Buddha, to open our minds and strengthen our endeavors to address major global challenges: from eradicating poverty to ending the proliferation of deadly weapons, from tackling intolerance and inequality to addressing the devastating consequences of climate change.

On this Vesak Day, I invite people of all traditions to reflect on the actions that we can take to create a kinder better world for future generations, based on solidarity, inclusiveness, peace and sustainability, a world one that leaves nobody behind.

Thank you.