

14 June 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the ninth Session of the Conference of States Parties**

Honourable Ministers, Mr. [Under/Deputy] Secretary-General, Ambassador Oh Joon, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to speak to you all here this morning.

International commitments to the rights and advancement of persons with disabilities are deeply rooted in the United Nations Charter.

They have been elaborated on over many decades through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the outcome document of the 2013 High-level Meeting on Disability and Development of the General Assembly.

And finally, now, thanks to the advocacy of disability organizations and concerted efforts of many others, they have been included at the heart of the 2030 Agenda – an agenda that promises to leave no one behind.

In the SDGs, disability is not about needs but about rights and empowerments.

Persons with disabilities have been given specific prominence across a range of the goals as well as in relation to data collection and monitoring of the SDGs.

Yesterday, my office organized a General Assembly Panel discussion on disabilities.

And, yesterday morning, civil society also held its annual forum which this year focused on leaving no one behind.

The high level of interest and participation in these meetings was very encouraging. In addition, they demonstrated that the links between the Convention and the SDGs need to be further explored and exploited, so that we translate global promises into concrete results for those living with disabilities.

164 States Parties to the Convention – all of whom have demonstrated high level commitments by ratifying the Convention – have obligations to take all necessary measures to promote disability inclusive development.

And each and every state party, and non-state parties, has significant work to do.

But, in today's world, success is no longer in the hands of Governments alone.

Broad based multi stakeholder action that brings together knowledge, capacity and resources, can be truly transformative.

I therefore call on all Governments and all major stakeholders to work together, through enhanced multi stakeholder initiatives and partnerships so that we empower over one billion persons with disabilities.

And I call on you to work in a way that shows your impatience with the current state of affairs.

As the great scientist and great example to us all, Stephen Hawkins, once said:

“If we want to travel into the future, we just need to go fast. Really fast.”

To arrive at the future promised in the Convention and in the 2030 Agenda, we should follow his advice.

We should go fast.

And act fast.

Thank you.