

20 June 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
at the opening of the briefing on Global Health Crises**

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Dr. David Nabarro, Dr. Bruce Aylward, **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I sincerely welcome you all to this briefing on Global Health Crises.

I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Mirsho Kikwete, Chair of the High-level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises; who is joining us through video conferencing from Senegal, Dakar.

Today we will hear a briefing on the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the global health architecture which of course responds to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises (A70/824).

We will also hear an update on the current health crises including the Zika virus and yellow fever outbreaks.

And we will learn about the latest developments from the 69th World Health Assembly and the new Health Emergencies Programme.

These are all extremely important and often complex issues.

This Assembly has over recent years played an increasingly important and active role in relation to various health issues.

From the resolutions on global health and foreign policy to the numerous briefings on Ebola including most recently last January; from the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS only two weeks ago to that on antimicrobial resistance on 21 September 2016.

Furthermore, health was of course at the heart of the MDGs. Now, it is very much at the centre of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Implementation of Goal 3, however, demands a change in mindset from addressing singular issues to taking a more systematic approach.

Addressing the global nature of many health issues will also be critical to our success.

Last year, the Ebola outbreak was on top of the global health agenda.

Today, many member states are deeply concerned about the Zika virus.

And, next year, it could of course be something else.

While we must not be alarmist about these matters, it is clear that there is no better time than now to discuss how we respond to health emergencies.

Governments, public health leaders, international organizations and other must focus on ensuring that we are better prepared in the future.

For that reason, I am very glad that we are joined here today by many leading figures in the health arena and I look forward to their presentations.