

20 June 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
On World Refugee Day**

65.3 million people forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of war and persecution. 21.3 million refugees. 40.8 million internally displaced persons. 3.2 million asylum seekers. These are the figures that tell us that today we are experiencing a global humanitarian and refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War.

But in truth, the numbers do little justice to the pain and trauma that this crisis is causing for individual women, men and children across our world. They fail to capture the hardship of those who flee and the fear of those who wait anxiously behind. They fail to capture the hopelessness of those held in detention centers or the final thoughts of those lost at sea without even a whisper.

As the number of people in need of protection and humanitarian assistance has nearly doubled in the past decade, no country or region can address this crisis on its own. Greater international cooperation and responsibility sharing is desperately needed. There are a number of important issues which need to be taken into consideration.

First, as conflicts are the main drivers of humanitarian needs, the international community must intensify its efforts to find political solutions to conflicts.

Second, the UN and other institutions and agencies must be provided with sufficient and predictable resources needed to fulfil their mandates and respond to the incredible levels of need.

Third, in 2014, children constituted 51 per cent of the refugee population. About half of these are missing out on primary education. The 2030 Agenda pledge to leave no one behind has placed a new obligation on all of us to reach those in situations of conflict, disasters, vulnerability and risk.

Fourth, as almost nine out of every 10 refugees (86 per cent) are in regions and countries considered economically less developed, the international community should enhance its solidarity with refugee hosting countries.

Fifth, given the scale of the crisis, current levels of third-country resettlement need to be reviewed. In 2014, only 15% of the global resettlement needs were met.

Sixth, at least fifty thousand persons, including thousands of children died in the past two decades while seeking to cross international borders. Governments must create safe, orderly and regular pathways for refugees to move to other countries.

Seventh, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are of grave concern. All of us must speak out in the face of serious violations of international law. States must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law.

Finally, xenophobic and racist rhetoric seems not only to be on the rise, but also to be becoming more socially and politically acceptable. We need to change the public discourse and speak out in favour of tolerance, diversity and equality.

With the World Humanitarian Summit last month and the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants in September, we have a chance to make 2016 a transformative year in focusing international cooperation on one of the most critical challenges of our generation.

On this World Refugee Day, people everywhere must unite by speaking up for the world's most vulnerable, challenging intolerance and demanding leadership and solutions from their governments.