

21 June 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the opening of the informal briefing on Syria by the Special Envoy  
of the UNSG for Syria Mr de Mistura, USG for humanitarian affairs  
& emergency relief coordinator Mr O'Brien and ASG for human  
rights Mr Šimonović**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all.

The conflict in Syria is now well into its fifth year.

It has contributed to a crisis that has brought violence, death, displacement, destruction, regional instability and unimaginable suffering for the Syrian people.

Yesterday, we marked World Refugee Day and it is worth bearing in mind that this crisis accounts to almost 17% of those displaced across the globe today.

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to meet some of these displaced people, in camps in Gaziantep in Turkey and in the Zaatari Camp in Jordan.

I have also discussed these matters with the relevant national and local authorities and witnessed leading humanitarian actors working towards a better future at the World Humanitarian Summit.

In this context and given the role which the General Assembly has played on this crisis as far back as 2012, I believe it is critical that this Assembly remains fully abreast of the most recent developments in Syria.

In December last year, many of us were encouraged to hear that a new diplomatic effort launched in Vienna was providing a glimmer of hope for a comprehensive solution.

Resolution 2254 adopted by the Security Council on 18 December 2015 expressed support for a Syrian-led political process that establishes “*credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance*” within a target of six months, “*sets a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution*” and for “*free and fair elections, pursuant to the new constitution, to be held within 18 months and administered under the supervision of the UN*”.

Since then, it has been a case of progress along-side setbacks.

The momentum to achieve these goals and others including those on humanitarian access, must not be lost.

We must not fail the people of Syria any longer.

I am therefore very grateful that we are joined today by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr Staffan de Mistura; the Under Secretary-General & Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr Stephen O'Brien; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr Ivan Šimonović, who will brief the General Assembly on latest developments and efforts to achieve the objectives set out in Resolution 2254.

Following briefings from the three speakers, I will open the floor to member states for remarks and questions not exceeding 3 minutes.

Thank you.