

13 July 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the closing of the High-level thematic debate – Human Rights at
the centre of the global agenda**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, over the past two days, we have heard from over 90 member states as well as speakers from civil society, academia, the private sector, the UN system and beyond.

In the coming weeks I will circulate a summary of what was an incredibly wide-ranging discussion.

Overall, however, I have two simple takeaways.

First, fifty years after the international covenants were agreed, this debate demonstrated that the struggle for human rights – civil and political, economic, social and environmental – is a constant one and a universal one.

Whether its ridding the world of discrimination, safeguarding the rule of law and access to justice for all or protecting fundamental freedoms; all countries must do more to meet their human rights obligations and protect the values that are essential for human rights including dignity, tolerance, pluralism, justice and equality.

Second, it is clear that the UN and its next SG must continue to fight for human rights and for those who defend those rights.

That work must be done through this Assembly, the Security Council and through ECOSOC. It must be done by the Human Rights Council and the Treaty bodies, by OHCHR and the entire UN system.

And with the 2030 Agenda, we have a unique opportunity to take tangible action to reinforce the widely accepted linkages between human rights, peace and development.

Finally, let me remind you of the formal meeting of the GA that will take place next Monday to observe the annual Nelson Mandela International Day on Monday, 18 July 2016.

I encourage you all to join in honouring the legacy of a man who devoted his life to very issues we have discussed in this debate.

Thank you all for your contributions and thank you also to all those who helped organize this meeting.