

15 July 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the International Youth Skills Day: “Skills Development to  
Improve Youth Employment”**

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you today.

Almost a year ago, here in New York, the Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

One of the moments of the summit that stands out most clearly in my mind was when Malala Yousafzai peered down from the balcony in the General Assembly hall and said:

“Leaders of the world – look up because the future generation is raising their voice”.

And this is what the 2030 Agenda is all about – transforming our world for future generations and leaving no one behind.

With the largest youth population ever, with 73.4 million young people unemployed globally in 2015, and with young women more likely to be underemployed and under-paid, the task ahead is immense.

Far too often, the incredible potential in the world’s youth population is wasted by extreme poverty, discrimination or lack of skills and information.

Skills development is a primary means of enabling young people to make a smooth transition to work.

Education and training can make the difference for youth between poverty and employment.

With the 2030 Agenda and especially SDG target 4.4, all Member States have committed to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Now, however, is the time to move from commitment to action.

The launch of the first-ever UN system-wide Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth aims to do just that.

We need initiatives like this to get the best out of the UN and to make sure that we move on this new agenda both at the local, national, regional and global levels.

In the end, it is of course national governments that have the main responsibility of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

But as has been said time and again, the transformation this Agenda demands, cannot be done by governments alone.

They will need the support, encouragement and push from all stakeholders and they will need the energy and the ideals of young people in particular.

I therefore encourage all young people to get involved, play your part, help us create a better future for all – for people and for planet alike.

Thank you.