

7 November 2016

## **71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly**

### **Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson, Security Council Reform**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

The item before us today on Security Council reform goes to the very heart of the purposes and principles of this organization.

Since the United Nations was founded 71 years ago, the world has changed dramatically, with population growth, economic, technological and human right advancements, rising interconnectivity and mobility of people, shifting global dynamics, climate change, environmental degradation, growing frequency and severity of natural disasters, and the scale, nature and complexity of global security challenges increasing greatly.

Indeed, the number of UN Member States has quadrupled over this time.

The rise of terrorism and violent extremism, expansion of asymmetrical warfare, risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors, and illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons – in both inter- and intra-State conflicts – is threatening international peace and security, and challenging the capacity of the United Nations to respond.

Indeed, as we meet, the world is facing the worst humanitarian and refugee crisis since World War II, and the UN is responding to the highest number of simultaneous security and humanitarian crises in its history.

As the UN's organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, ensuring that the Security Council is representative, responsive, effective, and efficient, is a well-founded priority for all Member States.

Institutional reform of the United Nations is not only possible but has already been taking place in recent times. Between the General Assembly and Security Council we have also seen greater coordination, not least during this year's appointment process for the new Secretary-General. I applaud these developments; however, it remains clear that much more work needs to be done.

Advancing Security Council reform will remain a key priority for the 71st Session of the General Assembly, as we look to take forward discussions in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions.

During the 70th session, the General Assembly decided at its last plenary meeting on this item, to immediately continue intergovernmental negotiations on the issue, in informal plenary, during the 71st session.

To facilitate these negotiations, I have appointed Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia, and Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania, as co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN). I am confident they will steer the IGN with great skill.

I thank them for taking on this critical role on behalf of the Assembly, and I call on all Member States to extend their full support and cooperation to the co-chairs, in order to comprehensively advance the process, in accordance with relevant General Assembly decisions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to warmly thank Ambassador Sylvie Lucas of Luxembourg for her work as Chair of the IGN during the 70th Session.

Distinguished Delegates,

As we embark on the next phase of this Member State-driven process, we should all acknowledge that meaningful progress will require genuine and open dialogue, bringing and receiving new ideas, and working together to find areas of agreement.

While the sensitivity and difficulty of these issues is well-understood, for reform to occur Member States will need to engage with greater flexibility in a process leading to substantive results.

I will remain engaged in the process throughout the 71st Session and will provide all necessary support to the co-chairs. My door is of course always open to any delegation wishing to discuss this matter.

Distinguished Delegates,

For the United Nations to be responsive and to meet the challenges of our times, reform of the Security Council is essential.

We must ensure that it reflects the realities of the 21st century, and is able to deliver on the purposes, principles, and promise of the UN Charter.

“Saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war” is an extraordinary responsibility shared by us all. It is a responsibility we should not shirk and will not shirk.

Thank you.