

Statement by

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, Denmark wishes to warmly welcome and congratulate the President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji. It has been an honor for Denmark to assume the Presidency during the 70th Session and we wish President Thomson every success in leading our crucial work in the year ahead. You can rely on Denmark for the full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

We live in volatile times. It is upon all of us to strengthen and to make our international cooperation more effective. We must do so in order to foster a peaceful, sustainable, and rights-based international society – based on the ambitious common goals that we have adopted in this hall.

While the challenges facing the United Nations today may seem daunting, our recent record does give cause for optimism. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the successful conclusion of the Paris Climate Agreement as well as the first ever World Humanitarian Summit have demonstrated our ability to come together to address today's global challenges.

But our task is now to turn this shared agenda into real change that will benefit people around the world. With a new Secretary-General coming into office, this will be a pivotal year for the United Nations.

Denmark has always believed that global challenges must be addressed through effective collective efforts, with a strong focus on the rights and freedoms of the individual human being.

Denmark has a vision for action based on three core elements – **dignity, development, and dialogue**. These elements characterize our approach to the work of the United Nations, and they will guide our candidacy for the Human Rights Council in 2019-2021.

Mr. President,

Around the world, many people are denied a life in **dignity**. Armed conflicts and violent extremism have led to human rights abuses and violations in several parts of the world. Syria, Iraq, and the Sahel region are some of the most serious and urgent crises facing us today. In many other places, violence and instability is causing immeasurable human suffering. Millions of people are subject to oppression, slavery and trafficking by the dark forces of ISIL and other extremist groups. They require a strong and determined collective response.

In Mali, Denmark contributes actively to the promotion of peace and stability. We contribute to MINUSMA and are engaged in long-term development cooperation with Mali. In Syria and Iraq, Denmark's engagements contribute significantly to the fight against ISIL, including also through support to local communities in the aftermath of conflict.

We must ensure that military achievements against ISIL are followed up by determined and coordinated efforts to sustain peace. Without this, we will not succeed. This fall Denmark will launch a new three-year regional stabilization programme for Syria and Iraq. The main focus will be to support immediate stabilization efforts in areas of Iraq that have been liberated from ISIL.

Our common security also depends on nations adhering to the norms and rules laid out by the United Nations – whether in the General Assembly, the Security Council or other regimes. All countries must abide by their obligations under international law, including on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this regards, Denmark condemns the recent nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and urge the international society to respond in a strong and unified manner.

Mr. President,

This past week the world has come together to address the mounting challenge that millions of people are forced to run from their homes due to armed conflict, natural disasters and poverty. A staggering 65 million people were displaced in 2015. This requires a determined and effective response from the United Nations.

Denmark welcomes the New York declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted last week underlining the principle of shared responsibilities and the importance of addressing the fundamental causes of migration.

Denmark is per capita among the largest humanitarian donors in the world and we will continue to shoulder our part.

Poverty and lack of opportunity are among underlying factors that lead to conflict and instability *as well as* key factors in driving people away from their homes.

Delivery on sustainable **development** and eradication of extreme poverty are vital avenues towards a free, peaceful, prosperous world, and to addressing fundamental causes of migration. Denmark's development cooperation is strong and a concrete testament to our commitment to the UN and to assist the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Since 1978, Denmark has been meeting the target of providing 0.7 pct. of gross national income in official development assistance. We strongly urge many more countries to meet this goal.

A pre-eminent challenge on the path to sustainable development is climate change. We must all take up the challenge of turning the commitments in the Paris climate agreement into action, bringing about immense and positive changes for planet and people.

You can count on Denmark at the forefront in this endeavor – both in terms of follow-up at home and internationally. The Danish government will put forward a motion for the ratification of the Paris Agreement in the Danish Parliament on 5 October.

The Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved if co-operation is integrated across different fields and sectors. The UN Development System must be reformed and made truly fit for purpose. The UN System must completely rethink its operational approach. Silo-thinking and internal competition for resources must become phenomena of the past.

Denmark firmly believes that we need a significantly strengthened focus on the role of youth. The 2030 Agenda is essentially an agenda for our future generations, and the engagement of the world's youth in its implementation is indispensable. Young people possess an enormous potential and must be involved in the work ahead.

We also need civil society, academia and the private sector to support policy implementation and provide innovative solutions and know-how. We need to engage in fruitful public-private partnerships to push implementation further ahead.

Governments can play an important role in further encouraging private business and investors to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That is why the Prime Minister of Denmark last week announced a new Sustainable Development Goals investment fund. The Danish Government has initially allocated 15 million US Dollars to this fund, and intends to allocate more in the coming years.

The goal is to raise capital from private investors and reach a capital base of up to 750 million US Dollars. Investments will be made across the Sustainable Development Goals, to improve energy, climate, industry and infrastructure, food production and health in order to generate sustainable growth, jobs and tax revenue in developing countries.

Additionally, we need global free trade as an essential element of fostering long-term development and economic growth. Denmark is actively advocating for creating better markets access for developing countries and improving business conditions, including at the World Trade Organization.

History shows that prosperity and human development has been propelled by free trade. In short: If goods pass borders, there is less likelihood that soldiers will.

Mr. President,

The effectiveness of the United Nations system, and indeed our ability to turn the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals into reality, begin and end with the preparedness of its Member States to work together.

Addressing global challenges through dialogue is the *raison d'être* of the UN, and it resonates indeed with Danish political tradition. That's why we have been strongly engaged from the beginning, in the build-up of the organisation. Also in very concrete terms, such as the design of the Trusteeship Council chamber, which was done by the Danish architect Finn Juhl. His intention was exactly to design the chamber so that it opened up for a dialogue among the delegates, and in doing so promoted the UN's democratic mission. In all modesty we think he succeeded quite well.

More than 50 years of partnerships in international development with an approach based on **dialogue** has taught us the value of partnership to ensure progress.

As just one example, Denmark has for decades been a strong supporter of National Human Rights Institutions. Human Rights Commissions, Ombudsmen, and other forms of independent Human Rights bodies from the Middle East to Africa and Eurasia continue to benefit from Danish support.

Denmark sees gender equality and the empowerment of women as key requirements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. Studies tell us that when a girl receives just one additional year of education, she can increase her earnings by up to 20 per cent. That is important, not only for her, but also for her family, her community, and her country.

Denmark was extremely proud to host the Women Deliver conference in Copenhagen earlier this year. The conference was a testimony to the importance that Denmark places on ensuring women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights. A plethora of programs, initiatives and strategies were showcased at the conference.

At home and abroad, Denmark promotes the human rights and values of indigenous peoples. We stand for the rights of indigenous peoples to control and influence their own development paths and to determine matters regarding their own economic, social, political, and cultural situation.

Denmark is also one of the strongest voices in the global fight against torture. For decades we've ensured the successful adoption of General Assembly resolutions, which further the work on the elimination of torture as laid out in the Convention. Implementation is, however, key. And that is why we - together with Chile, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco – have launched the Convention Against Torture Initiative. Our goal is to work towards universal ratification and better implementation of the Convention by 2024.

Mr. President,

As the people's organization, the United Nations needs to do better to foster trust, transparency, and efficiency. I am proud that during Denmark's presidency for the General Assembly, important steps have been taken to increase transparency – in the work of the office of the President as well in the selection process for the next Secretary-General.

If the UN is to remain a relevant and legitimate organization for peace, development and human rights, we must continue on this path of increased openness and transparency. This is in the shared interest of all Member States.

In closing, allow me, on behalf of the Government of Denmark, to take this opportunity to also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Denmark salutes the progressive leadership and the determination that Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon has displayed through a difficult and challenging period in the history of the UN.

The Secretary General has tirelessly led the way for finding viable solutions to deal with global challenges, in particular on climate change. A journey that has taken us from Bali to Copenhagen, to Paris, and which resulted last December in an ambitious global agreement to fight climate change. Denmark salutes the progressive leadership and the determination.

It is of utmost importance that the new Secretary-General will show the same determination towards forcefully addressing the challenges for the millions of displaced, refugees and migrants across the world, ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and undertaking the necessary crucial reforms of the United Nations.

As we strive to reform this world organization, Denmark will stand by the side of the next Secretary-General and continue to support and take active and constructive part in the critical work of the United Nations going forward.

I thank you.