

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

70 years ago this organization was born in the chaos and ruins of the Second World War. It was born with the hope and vision that the future would be better and more peaceful than the past.

Small and large countries signed the UN Charter. My own country as signatory number 50. It was a commitment to solve common problems through cooperation and dialogue.

How is the world today compared to the one of our grandparents?

Lots of progress has been made.

We live in a world that is wealthier. Millions have been lifted out of poverty. There is a dramatic increase in children – and in particular girls – attending schools.

We continue to witness horrible conflicts in many parts of the world, but the number and magnitude of armed conflicts between states have decreased. And our fight against deadly diseases has saved millions.

This is one side of the coin.

We also live in a changing world. Conflicts remain the biggest threat to human development. The number of refugees and displaced persons is growing at alarming speed. Violent extremism is spreading. Human rights are violated. Our planet is under stress due to scarce resources and climate change.

This is the other side of the coin.

The world is complex. As it has always been. There are no simple solutions. There never was. We need to engage actively and cooperate closely to address the challenges. Today as we did 70 years ago.

From my perspective, there are three overshadowing priorities for the UN in the coming years.

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First, peace and security.

As for many others in my generation, my political view of the world was shaped by 1989. The wall came down. The Iron Curtain disappeared.

Today the world again faces a situation, where cooperation and dialogue is all too often replaced by force and violence.

We must ensure that the UN can effectively provide security in the face of ever more complex crises and threats.

In Ukraine, we have seen completely unacceptable violations of international law and principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In Syria, civilians suffer from horrific abuses. Committed by the terror organisation ISIL. And by the Assad regime.

The Danish Government continues to support efforts for a political solution to the conflict. And we are proud to be a member of the International Coalition against ISIL.

We need a strong and unified response to violent extremism and terrorism.

Not just in Syria and Iraq, but also in parts of Africa, where violent extremism and armed conflicts are growing.

Denmark will do its part. We plan to increase our contribution to the UN operation in Mali – MINUSMA.

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A very visible consequence of all these conflicts is the massive refugee and migration flows. Almost 60 million people are fleeing their homes.

We have an international responsibility to provide the necessary protection for refugees. Many of these people have no food. No medicine. No schools for their children. They need our support.

Denmark takes this responsibility very seriously. Last year, we were the 2nd largest recipient of Syrian refugees per capita in the EU.

I also welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to strengthen UN peace operations. But we need more than blue helmets to ensure lasting peace.

We need a UN Security Council that is ready to take the necessary decisions to maintain international peace and security. A Security

Council that can effectively address conflicts in a timely manner. And that reflects the world as it is today.

The international community must have the right instruments to adequately address the situation, and we must keep an open mind when we evaluate our instruments at hand.

Many people migrate for economic reasons. In search of a better life. Their hopes are understandable. But mass migration is obviously an immense challenge for our societies. For our international cooperation and our solidarity.

First and foremost, mass migration is a global challenge. We must address the root causes.

People migrate because they have lost hope at home. Inclusive economic growth in developing countries should be our common goal. There are no easy solutions.

The UN is an important part of the answer. Member States have the primary responsibility for development and progress in their own countries. But we must all do our part and provide the necessary financial contributions to ensure that they succeed.

Denmark is ready to do its part, as we have been doing since 1978.

We will remain committed to the UN target of 0.7 percent target of development assistance. Denmark is widely recognized as a leading humanitarian donor. And we will continue to give this area high priority.

My government last week decided to allocate an additional 100 million Euros to humanitarian assistance and to measures that support the European efforts to address the mass migration from Syria and its neighborhood.

I am deeply concerned that the humanitarian needs far outgrow the available financing. I call on all states to increase their humanitarian efforts. The international community must find solutions to this extraordinary situation.

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That leads me to the next priority. Human rights and gender equality.

The Charter says it very clearly: The equal and indispensable rights of all people are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

The best way to build a better world is to unleash the power of the individual. For the sake of the common good.

Today, more people live in democracies than ever before. But many people's lives are still threatened because of who they are or what they believe.

Denmark has always pursued an active human rights policy. Based on dialogue as the key tool to progress.

My government is a strong advocate of women's rights. Women are key drivers to ensure sustainable development and to end poverty.

Denmark is honoured to host the Women Deliver conference in Copenhagen in May 2016. I hope that many of you will join us in Copenhagen.

Denmark is also engaged in the global fight against torture. We are proud to be part of the Convention Against Torture Initiative.

Our goal is universal ratification and better implementation of the Convention by 2024. We call on all States to join this goal.

Let me put it very clearly: Denmark is entirely committed to upholding the core values of the United Nations.

That is why Denmark has decided to run for a seat in the UN Human Rights Council in the period from 2019 to 2021. Our candidacy enjoys the support of all the Nordic countries. I hope all of you here today will find us worthy of your vote.

I can assure you: We will aspire to be a strong partner for all. To advance human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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The third and final major challenge for the UN is to implement the development agenda and effectively address climate change.

This weekend, I had the privilege and honour to co-chair the Sustainable Development Summit. We adopted the new development

agenda. Now we need to act. Through national policies. And by supporting those countries that need the help the most.

The Sustainable Development Goals carry a multi-trillion dollar price tag. It cannot be solved by governments or aid alone. We need the support of all actors: private enterprises, civil society, NGOs, international organisations and many others.

We must find new innovative ways of engaging these actors, if we are serious about delivering on the development agenda.

That is particularly true when it comes to addressing climate change.

Let me give you an example.

Denmark has established a climate investment fund to promote private climate investments in developing countries and emerging markets.

Danish pension savings now contribute to financing the largest African wind farm in Lake Turkana, Kenya.

We need more solutions like this to deliver on the development agenda. And to reach an ambitious, binding climate agreement in Paris.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need for an effective UN has never been greater. If we fail to deal with the enormous tasks facing us, there is a risk that we will undermine the key values and principles of the UN Charter.

Throughout the UN's history, Denmark has been among the strongest supporters of our world organisation. That will not change.

I am honoured that a Dane has assumed the Presidency of the General Assembly.

My Government is fully committed to support Mr. Lykketoft in his important work.

70 years ago our grandparents had a bold vision. They believed it was possible to create a better future for the peoples of the world.

The achievements during the last 70 years have been remarkable.

This anniversary is an historic opportunity to set ambitious goals for the future. We have agreed on the new development agenda. Now we must act to show our grandchildren that we are able to deliver on our promises.

Today. Tomorrow. And 70 years from now.

Thank you.