

Statement by Denmark in General Debate of the 72nd Session of the UN GA

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This General Assembly is opening amidst a period of unprecedented change.

Threats and challenges such as poverty, terrorism, climate change, violations of human rights, gender inequality, armed conflict, displacement and irregular migration are ever more inter-connected. Our responses to these challenges must reflect their complexity. Our responses will require better and deeper cooperation and must involve more stakeholders, new solutions and more effective international institutions.

The evolving global landscape gives us an opportunity to renew and redefine how we work together. The United Nations must seize this opportunity. Denmark congratulates Mr. António Guterres on the successful beginning of his term as Secretary-General. You can count on Denmark's full support in your efforts.

More than ever, we need leadership and common purpose to steer this organization in a new direction. Staying on the current path is not an option if we want to maintain the legitimacy of the United Nations. Fundamental and ambitious reform is the only way forward.

Mr. President,

This week, the Secretary-General has laid out a strong vision for a reformed United Nations and a call for action to all – from Governments to the staff of this great organization to our partners outside this building: we must all invest in and commit to this agenda for change. As Member States, we have a responsibility to find common solutions that will turn our shared goals into positive change and protect the principles and values of the United Nations.

That spirit must also guide our work in the years to come. Denmark is committed to international cooperation through the UN, built on shared values, the rule of law and human rights.

That is one of the reasons why Denmark is running for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the term 2019-2021. Denmark has never before been a member of the Human Rights Council. As a long-standing supporter of the United Nations and with a consistent advocate of the protection of dignity and rights of all people, we believe that we would make a significant contribution in the Council, based on a commitment to promote dignity, dialogue and development.

Mr. President,

Denmark is committed to an ambitious follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement – at home and abroad. We have provided at least 0.7 per cent of our GNI in ODA for the last 40 years and will continue to do so in the future. We call on all developed countries to realize the 0.7 per cent target.

With only 13 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we have no time to waste in fundamentally rethinking the United Nations Development System and its support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Secretary-General has presented a set of clear reform proposals. Now we must come together and support their implementation. This is not a donor vs. developing country, a North vs. South, debate. No, let us support the Secretary-General's plan because we agree that we all have an interest in a United Nations that is cost-effective and creates coherent and sustainable solutions on the ground. Citizens around the world expect nothing less.

We need to break with the status quo particularly in four priority areas:

First, a reformed UN Development System must deliver on the promise of unified country-level engagements where silo-thinking, competition for resources and fragmented support strategies become a thing of the past.

Second, in our response to the many complex crises around the world, we need to create a stronger bridge between immediate relief and long-term development objectives.

Our support for the UN's humanitarian work is as strong as ever. Denmark is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors, and in our 2018 aid budget we will allocate more funds to humanitarian action than ever before.

We are fully behind the Secretary-General's call for a New Way of Working in responding to protracted humanitarian crisis and displacement.

We must meet the needs of those affected while also creating hope for a better future. The New Way of Working is about much stronger cooperation and coordination between partners in and outside the UN System – and Denmark will continue to play a leading role in advancing this agenda.

Thirdly, the UN Development System needs to be built on the basic premise that neither the United Nations nor governments have the capacity or resources to realize the 2030 Agenda. Partnering with the private sector, civil society, academia and innovators will be crucial. The UN must rethink how it incorporates these resources on our way towards the 2030 goals

Denmark is taking lead to support strong, meaningful, principle-based partnerships. Together with our strategic partners, Chile, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, Republic of Korea, and Vietnam, the Danish Government this week launched a new initiative in support of the 2030 Agenda – Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 - P4G.

P4G brings together Governments, companies, cities, think tanks and investors to create and boost public-private partnerships for a greener tomorrow. Through P4G, we will leverage partnerships which will help us take better care of our planet.

Fourthly, Denmark welcomes the Secretary-General's strong commitment to gender equality in our reform efforts. Women and girls all over the world must be empowered to contribute to stronger communities and societies. Ensuring women equal opportunities is crucial for reaching the SDGs.

In the Danish Government's view, gender equality is first and foremost a question of dignity and ensuring the human rights of all women and girls, including safeguarding sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is fundamentally about the right to decide over one's own body.

As one of the founding members of the SheDecides movement, Denmark is committed to continuing to push for progress and to protect the rights of all women and girls. Just recently, Denmark announced a major increase in our contribution to UNFPA.

Too many young people today face lack of opportunities and poverty. We have the largest youth population in history. Denmark is committed to helping youth get the means and skills required to be drivers of development.

Mr. President,

If we want to create a more stable and peaceful future, Member States must adhere to international law and common rules for coexistence and cooperation. Regretfully, we still see Member States who put national interests before respect for the dignity and rights of their citizens or ignore the legitimate concerns of their neighbors as well as regional and global stability.

The nuclear and missile tests conducted by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a blatant disregard of our collective security, non-proliferation norms and rules and the continued demands by the Security Council.

Denmark strongly condemns this irresponsible behavior and calls on the regime in Pyongyang to deescalate the current situation and commit to a peaceful solution in conformity with the resolutions of the Security Council.

The recent outbreak of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State is deeply concerning. Denmark calls on the Government of Myanmar to facilitate humanitarian assistance to all those in need and commit to aiding the safe return of civilians fleeing from the conflict. We welcome the Government's commitment to implement without delay the recommendations of the Advisory Commission led by former Secretary General Kofi Annan. Violence must stop and the security forces must ensure protection of civilians. We condemn the attacks on security forces and the subsequent serious human rights violations.

We applaud the government of Bangladesh for providing protection to civilians fleeing across the border. Denmark stands ready to assist both Myanmar and Bangladesh in pursuing integrated humanitarian and development solutions for the affected areas.

Mr. President,

Denmark stands in solidarity with all those affected by terrorism and violent extremism. We continue to be an active participant in the fight against these threats to our societies, including through our military and civilian contributions to the Global Coalition against Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. And we are a key partner in other conflict areas such as Afghanistan, Mali, the Sahel and Somalia.

To defeat terrorism, we need to supplement our military effort with broad-based engagements that also focus on cutting off terrorist financing, repelling extremist propaganda online and offline as well as stabilizing areas liberated from Da'esh and building peace in conflict-affected countries.

The United Nations plays a central role when it comes to stabilizing war-torn countries and building lasting peace. But comprehensive reforms are needed. Denmark welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General for the peace and security architecture of the UN with a streamlined, coordinated and effective response in the field.

As Member States, we have an obligation and a shared interest to support these critical reforms so that the United Nations can fulfil its purpose and its promise to the world. The time for bold ambitions is now.

If we do not support reforms, if we deny generations' hope and opportunity for a more prosperous future, we will continue to witness international turmoil and unprecedented levels of displacement. People forced to leave their homes and venture out on dangerous journeys. Many falling into the hands of relentless smugglers and traffickers.

Denmark contributes significantly to help displaced populations and others in emergency situations to live dignified lives. Last year, Denmark contributed more than 80 mill USD to the Syrian crisis alone. Our programs focus on helping refugees in their regions of origin, which enable us to use our funds most efficiently and ultimately help more people.

Unmanaged migration poses a significant global challenge and we need to strengthen our cooperation and commitment to existing international legal frameworks. In this regard, Denmark welcomes the dialogue taking place in preparation for the Global Compact on Migration.

Mr. President,

Through leadership and a renewed commitment to a reformed United Nations;

Through innovation and willingness to challenge old ways of thinking;

Through strong partnerships across the public-private spectrum, across age and gender divides, across different organizations and institutions;

The opportunity to create a new path for our united nations *is* here.

I thank you.