

**PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Statement by

H.E. Ulla Tørnæs,
Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark

Statement by Denmark

**73rd Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations**

General Debate

28 September 2018

New York
Friday, 28 September 2018

Check against delivery

E-mail: nycmis@um.dk
<http://fmnewyork.um.dk>

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to join others in paying tribute to the memory of the late Kofi Annan. A true world leader and a firm believer in the strength of this organization.

Madam President,

Seventy years ago, this General Assembly adopted the first global human rights charter – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration codified the most basic principles of human dignity – emphasizing that we are all equal. We committed ourselves to an international order where rights and freedoms could be fully realized.

Seventy years ago, we knew that international cooperation was the only way to protect our populations. And through this organization, we *have* delivered remarkable results.

Still, the foundation on which this organization is built has perhaps never been under more pressure than today. The very principle of multilateralism is being questioned. Doubt is being cast on the frameworks that protect human rights, ensure free trade and promote global development. Insufficient action is being taken on global problems like climate change, poverty, migration, terrorism and violent extremism.

Madam President,

To Denmark, the path forward is clear: Global challenges need global solutions. And to this end, we need a strong United Nations with its unique legitimacy and its universal membership. A United Nations that delivers on its full potential.

Denmark remains committed to the Secretary-General's reform agenda. This year, we open the General Assembly with three agreed tracks for reform.

Denmark had the honor together with Algeria to facilitate the negotiations on development system reform. We are proud of the result, and we will continue to play a constructive role in the important implementation ahead. Denmark intends – for instance – to contribute more than 10 million US Dollar to support the establishment of the new Resident Coordinator system and we encourage others to follow suit.

Member States have given their clear voice of support. Now the reforms must be turned into reality. The world expects a new and more streamlined UN to emerge. All parts of the UN must embrace this opportunity to change and create real improvements to the benefit of the people.

Madam President,

As Member States, we also have to re-invest in the UN and take responsibility for our multilateral cooperation and the rule-based international order. That is exactly why Denmark is running for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the term 2019 to 2021.

If elected, we will promote the rights and equal opportunities of women; continue our longstanding fight against torture; protect the rights of indigenous peoples; and encourage freedom of religion or belief. This has to be done without discrimination on any grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity. That is the Danish DNA. And the DNA of the United Nations.

Madam President,

In several parts of the world, gender equality is but a distant hope. Women's rights are under increasing pressure.

We cannot accept this. We must stand up and challenge this. Women must unfold their potential – without question – to the benefit of all. We must ensure that she decides.

Gender equality and equal opportunities is not only a fundamental human right. It is a precondition. For development, peace and prosperity in any country, anywhere in the world.

Madam President,

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change set out a strong global vision for achieving a more sustainable planet. Denmark is committed to this common vision.

For more than 40 consecutive years, we have proudly delivered on the UN target on providing 0.7 per cent of GNI in official development assistance. Sadly, we are in a group that has far too few members.

While ODA is crucial to ensure global development, we need the involvement of all actors, especially the private sector, civil society and local authorities.

We need to give young people a seat at the table. To ensure that development is not just for young people – but *with* and *by* young people. This is why Denmark was the first country to announce a contribution to the Secretary-General’s new Youth Strategy, “Vision 2030”. We congratulate the UN and all young people on this strategy and look forward to seeing it in action.

Member states and the UN System need to adapt to the world around us and embrace and use new technologies. We need the innovative ideas, the finance and the expertise that only the private sector can bring to the table. In short, to reach the SDGs over the next 12 years, we need to rethink the way we do business here. The clock is ticking.

That is one of the reasons why Denmark – together with our partners – launched the initiative Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 – the P4G. With P4G, we are bringing together major companies, cities, civil society, think tanks and governments to boost and create partnerships for a greener tomorrow. In October, Denmark will host a high-level P4G summit in Copenhagen to forge and accelerate such partnerships.

Madam President,

Education is the foundation for knowledge and harnessing the technologies and opportunities of tomorrow. And when it comes to education we can and must do better. Much better.

Globally, 130 million girls do not go to school. In crisis situations, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out-of-school than boys. And girls are at much greater risk of being victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, of early child marriage and childbirth. Just think, in parts of the world, girls as low as nine years old are being forced to marry adult men. This is just not acceptable. We must let girls be girls, *not* brides.

Education is a beacon of hope for these girls. That is why Denmark is now the biggest contributor to Education Cannot Wait. That is why Denmark will spend almost 70 million US dollars next year on education in developing countries.

Because Denmark will leave no girl behind.

Madam President,

Displacement and unsafe and irregular migration poses a significant global challenge that requires determined efforts at all levels.

Denmark welcomes the finalization of negotiations in July of a Global Compact for Migration. The Compact establishes a global framework for common action. The Compact presents a much-needed path to manage irregular migration in a safe and orderly manner and to curb irregular migration, including through

facilitation of return. All with respect for human rights and the principle of state sovereignty at its core.

We also welcome the agreement on the global compact on refugees. Denmark is per capita one of the world's largest humanitarian donors. A key focus of ours is to help refugees and internally displaced persons to a life in safety and dignity.

By ensuring close coordination between our humanitarian and development aid, Denmark is helping to build the foundation for lasting solutions and a safe return when the time is right.

The horrors in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere tell the grim story of why humanitarian efforts are so strongly needed.

The conflict in Syria continues in its 8th year. So many have already experienced unspeakable suffering, evil and atrocities. Three million people have been at the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib. This tragedy in Syria cannot go on.

Madam President,

Earlier this week, Member States honored Nelson Mandela. In a fitting celebration of an iconic proponent for peace, leaders from across the world underscored the importance of a joint commitment to build a peaceful and prosperous world.

As we push for reforms and strengthen our multilateral institutions, we have to acknowledge the interconnectedness of today's global challenges. We need integrated and shared approaches to stabilization, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

That is why Denmark has been a strong supporter of the UN Peacebuilding Fund. We are proud to step up our commitment with a new contribution to the Fund of 15 million US Dollars over the coming three years.

Madam President,

The world is witnessing armed conflicts that could have been prevented or stopped years ago. Too many states are failing their responsibility to protect their own populations against the most horrific crimes.

Denmark will continue to insist on accountability for the most appalling crimes. Such crimes must never go unpunished and the victims deserve justice. This year, we mark the 20th anniversary of the International Criminal Court. A landmark achievement to ensure accountability and justice.

The recent report of the Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar clearly underlines the need for accountability in relation to the Rohingya crisis. At the same time, we must not forget the enormous need for humanitarian assistance and development aid.

I am happy to announce that Denmark will provide additional 7 million US Dollars for an extraordinary humanitarian response to the crisis. This comes on top of the 46 million US Dollars already provided since 2017.

Denmark is also supporting the office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Myanmar.

Madam President,

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is a strong reminder of what is at stake. Denmark fully supports the continuous efforts by South Korea and the United States to seek a diplomatic solution with the North Korean regime.

Now, North Korea must take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Until then, sanctions and international pressure must remain firmly in place.

Madam President,

The problems facing the world are dire. We will only be successful if we act together. Multilateralism and cooperation must be the foundation.

The task may seem impossible, but we have done it before. With the United Nations, we have fostered an international order – a strong set of common values, rules and goals.

People around the world demand solutions. The UN cannot let them down.
Now is the time for us to reform and rebuild this institution.

Thank you.