

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Fifth Committee of the General Assembly

11am - 12 October 2015

***Address by H.E. Mr Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly***

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to meet with you this morning.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal, on your election to Chair the Fifth Committee. I have great confidence in you, your commendable Bureau, and the ever reliable Secretariat, to ably advance the Committee's work over the coming period.

During the current session, this Committee will carry out tasks that are crucial to the overall functioning of this Organisation and to its work across the three pillars of the UN: Peace and Security, Human Rights, and Development.

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In addition to agreeing the UN budget, the Fifth Committee will, among other things, address the scale of assessment and review the common system compensation package. It will also deal with matters relating to peace and security. Indeed I am just coming from a plenary debate where member states are considering policy implications of the Secretary General's recent report on peace operations - which may, in due course and in accordance with established practises, require the attention of this committee.

The fifth Committee will also examine matters relating to sustainable development. In particular, it will consider possible financial implications for the UN arising from the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. I sincerely hope that the constructive spirit displayed by member states to secure these ground-breaking agreements, will also inform the work of this committee during this 70th session.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are joined by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who is here to introduce the UN programme budget for the next two years. As a former Minister of Finance, and having personally been engaged in budget negotiations, I am keenly aware of just how complex and challenging such work can be.

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Indeed, the UN Programme Budget was one of the issues I discussed extensively with Heads of State and Government during the high level week just passed. And I was encouraged by the level of cross-regional political commitment for approval of the UN budget in a timely manner.

Such an outcome is absolutely possible.

Last year, for instance, this committee demonstrated its ability to effectively and expeditiously deliver on a critical and pressing global issue by taking swift action on the UN's response to the Ebola Emergency. Furthermore, negotiations in the March and May sessions this year were also held in a very good spirit. We therefore need to build on this momentum and continue to develop greater trust amongst the membership.

It is also important to continually improve the working methods of this committee. Improving its efficiency and effectiveness, while guaranteeing open, inclusive, and transparent decision-making processes, is crucial.

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The responsibility, ladies and gentlemen, to bring this about and to advance the Committee's considerable agenda, however, rests with you, the member states.

The critical and complex issues on the Committee's agenda will require each and every one of you to work proficiently and tirelessly to reach a timely consensus. Successful negotiations of the UN budget will require commitment and a spirit of compromise. I therefore encourage you all to use the time allocated to the committee wisely, to set aside differences, engage in a constructive manner and focus on addressing common challenges. It is worth remembering that, that which divides us makes us weaker whereas that which unites us makes us stronger.

As President of the General Assembly for this 70th session, my aim is to help this organisation demonstrate a new commitment to action. This also applies to the work of the Fifth Committee. Rest assured that I will remain engaged throughout this session and that I will do all I can to build bridges to ensure timely conclusion of your work, particularly on the UN budget.

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Such an outcome will be beneficial both to the UN itself and to you the member states. I wish you a productive session and I thank you for your kind attention.