

1 December 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
On the occasion of World AIDS Day**

The commemoration of the 2015 World AIDS Day comes at pivotal time in history with the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An agenda that demands the tackling of 17 sustainable development goals in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced manner.

The third goal commits all governments to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being for all at all ages, and specifically end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. It is a commitment that recognises and builds on the remarkable achievements made to the global HIV and AIDS response over the past three decades but also recognizes that addressing HIV/AIDS is intrinsically linked to a number of other SDGs related to poverty eradication, education, gender equality, equality, inclusive societies to name a few.

Recent reports by UNAIDS offer good reason for optimism. The progress against the bold targets to be achieved by 2015, which our leaders unanimously adopted in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, is encouraging. The target on providing anti-retroviral treatment to 15 million people living with HIV by 2015 was met ahead of time, in March 2015. The target on the elimination of new HIV infections among children is within reach.

There is still work to be done – we are still far from achieving the target on halving the number of new HIV infections. While trends are positive for other age groups, the epidemic continues to take its deadly toll on adolescents, and especially on adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa. Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV – and even criminalisation of those at the higher risk of infection, such as men who have sex with men, transgender persons, injecting drug users and sex workers – is persistent in all parts of the world. This stigmatizes and marginalizes the people that need access to life-saving services the most, and undermines the effective response to the epidemic.

As we approach the High-Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS in 2016, there is no room for complacency. The High-Level Meeting provides an important opportunity to deliver an ambitious outcome with bold specific and measurable targets and actions that will help achieve Goals 3 and end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. It provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the response by renewing our political commitment at the highest level and by mobilising engagement of a broader range of civil society and private sector actors, in all their diversity. It also provides an opportunity to leverage the AIDS response for accelerating progress across multiple SDGs, by maximising its synergies with other health and broader developments efforts.

Today I call on all Member States and other stakeholders to join forces to make the High-Level Meeting a success that will help achieve the end of the AIDS epidemic by 2030, advance progress on the sustainable development agenda and leave no one behind!