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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Opening of the 16th Doha Forum**

Your Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, Mr. Secretary-General Honourable Heads of State and Government, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, It is a pleasure to be here in Doha this evening.

As President of the United Nations General Assembly, I have the privilege to witness first hand how the UN's 193 member states are grappling with the changes and challenges we are experiencing in our world today.

Over the past nine months, I have met with leaders from every corner of the globe, with civil society organizations, opinion makers, intellectuals and businesses representing every interest in the world; with young people eager to be the change they want to see in the world; and with all 9 candidates wishing to become the next UN Secretary-General.

From my engagements with these actors, from the great agreements of last year in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, and from the political and social upheaval we see in many parts of the world today, not least in Syria and the wider Middle East, one fact is abundantly clear:

Our world is on the threshold of truly transformative change.

It is a transformation that demands leaders with the courage to solve today's complex conflicts, to overcome deeply rooted religious divisions; to tackle the root causes of violent extremism and to build better relations with their neighbors.

It is a transformation that demands a rapid transition to low-carbon climate-resilient development pathways, so that we avert the worst impacts of climate change, protect our planet and embrace the opportunities of the green economy.

It is a transformation that demands prosperity that is shared more evenly across society – where poverty and inequality are dramatically reduced; and where every single person without distinction is given a fair chance at life.

And finally, it is a transformation that demands greater openness and justice in our systems of governance – where politics is more inclusive of those we differ from; where dissent is seen as

integral to accountability and effective policy-making; and where the human rights of all – of women and girls, young people, religious minorities, migrants and others – are fully protected. At this moment in time, these demands are being made of all countries and they will only bring greater displacement, tragedy, violence and pain if they go unaddressed.

How we manage the risks and opportunities presented by this transformation is, I believe, the defining challenge of our 21st century.

In this regard, each and every country must reflect on their own national circumstances and what they need to do to manage this transformation.

But at the same time, in this ever more inter-connected world, no government can go it alone. The international community, the global business community, international financial industry, civil society, faith groups, academia and others must step up to the plate.

Multi-lateral frameworks like those agreed last year will help us advance together and further agreements at the World Humanitarian Summit next week and at the Summit on Large movements of migrants and refugees next September, will do likewise.

But in addition, the UN itself must become a more effective source of support for governments, including here in the Middle East.

In the area of sustainable development, for example, a more streamlined, focussed and engaging UN can help governments mobilize the capacity and resources needed to get SDG implementation off to the best possible start – from tackling illicit financial flows to putting in place the regulatory framework to drive a shift towards green investment.

In terms of human rights, the UN must help member states to lay the foundations for better compliance with international human rights law, and perhaps most urgently, reassert the need for strict adherence to international humanitarian law.

And in terms of maintaining international peace and security in today's and tomorrow's world, a series of UN reviews demonstrate that concrete action is required to strengthen the credibility and crucial role of the UN in this area – from becoming better at preventing conflicts and mediating peace to offering more tailored support in the face of global terrorism and above all, maintaining the UN's relevance and usefulness for global, regional or local powers alike.

His Excellency Ban-Ki-Moon has shepherded in extremely ambitious frameworks which have laid solid foundations for a better world.

And it will be up to his successor to ensure that those foundations do not go to waste. That person must embrace this challenge and stand ready to make the UN even more outward looking, more solution oriented, more agile and more responsive.

Only then can it truly help member states address our common global challenges.

The 2016 Doha Forum is a unique opportunity to discuss and identify concrete ways for actors in this region to do the same.

To conclude, therefore, I would like to warmly thank His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar for the invitation to participate in this important meeting and I look forward to very fruitful discussions.

Thank you.