

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Lykketoft Advocates the Importance of Reasserting Effective Multilateralism at the Arab Perspectives Workshop in Cairo

Tuesday, 1 March 2016 - Addressing more than 100 participants at the High-Level Workshop on “Arab Perspectives on the Future of the UN Peace and Security Architecture” today, Mogens Lykketoft, via video message, highlighted how the ongoing reviews around the world are “genuine opportunities to reassert effective multilateralism” in the areas of UN peace operations, peacebuilding and women, peace and security. “It has become clear to me that just as multilateralism is re-asserting itself in relation to sustainable development, regrettably, in the area of international peace and security, the opposite appears to be happening,” he said.

The President of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly, pointed out that emerging patterns in ongoing reviews have shown the dire “need to recognize the primacy of politics; to increase investment in prevention; to advance a people centered approach to peace and security and to strengthen partnerships in this area, particularly with regional organizations by enhance the level of flexibility in addressing budgetary and management issues.” He went on to say that “Prevention is not only the safest way to protect lives but it is the single most efficient way to avoid the destruction that conflicts bring”, but that mediation or preventative diplomacy is much more cost-effective than trying to maintain peace in already-fragile societies in today’s complex world.

Lykketoft asked the participants, which include a number of prominent officials from member states of the League of Arab States; international, regional and sub-regional organizations and UN agencies; Arab think tanks and eminent experts; to use their expertise to provide possible concrete steps from an “Arab perspective” to address the “glaring weaknesses” in current UN systems and tools. These weaknesses, he stated, have resulted in escalating conflicts, loss of innocent civilian lives, inability to secure basic humanitarian assistance and the inability to produce and sustain massive humanitarian responses or facilitate peaceful political settlements. He used Syria as an example of how the system has failed on many levels. He also expressed his concern regarding the fact that the international community is not well prepared to face other important and difficult challenges such as climate change or violent extremism and terrorism. However, he also described how the Arab Spring has many lessons for the international community to draw upon in relation to the way different populations revolted in the hope of better governance and more inclusive and fairer societies. He also made specific reference to how “ensuring the transition and democracy in general, involves the different parts of society as opposed to the winner-takes all electoral policies”.

He finished by thanking the Cairo Centre for Conflict Prevention & Peacekeeping in Africa, its

Director, Ashraf Swelam and his team, for organizing the important workshop that is part of the ongoing global discussions that will inform the debate of the General Assembly that he has taken the initiative to organize on 10-11 May 2016 on “UN, Peace and Security” in New York.

CCCPA organized the Workshop in partnership with the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It comes in the context of CCCPA’s role as a voice of the global south in consequential debates about the future of the UN peace and security architecture and its involvement in the process of the UN reviews. In November 2014, the Center - in collaboration with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) - hosted an international workshop on “Regional Aspects of Peacebuilding: Identifying Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities”; and in March 2015, it hosted the “MENA Consultations of the High Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations”.