General Assembly Elects Danish Parliament Speaker President of Seventieth Session, also Selects 21 Vice Presidents, Main Committees Bureaux

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Sixty-ninth General Assembly,

94th & 95th Meetings (PM)

The General Assembly today elected by acclamation Mogens Lykketoft, Speaker of Parliament of Denmark, as President of its seventieth session, also selecting, in consecutive meetings, Bureaux members of its six Main Committees.

“I aim to organize our work in a way that allows us to reflect on the successes — but also the shortcomings — in these first 70 years, while also looking to the future,” Mr. Lykketoft said, recalling that the United Nations’ seventieth anniversary would be celebrated throughout the session.

The theme of his tenure would be “The United Nations at 70 — A New Commitment to Action”, he said.  In that timespan, the world’s population had almost tripled to more than 7 billion people.  The struggle to catalyse sustainable development and address climate change was both the challenge and the opportunity of a lifetime.  The key to success lay in identifying new ways for all countries to produce and consume without undermining our common future.

Indeed, he said, in a world where the 92 wealthiest people owned more than the poorest half of humanity, all nations must play a part in strengthening resource mobilization to build a more equitable world.  Member States were in the final stretch towards adopting a universal, people-centred and transformative development agenda which would enable action on eradicating extreme poverty, keeping climate change at bay and creating inclusive economic growth.  His first priority would be to ensure that the September summit for the agenda’s adoption brought leaders into a “new commitment to action” for the next 15 years.

His second priority — the United Nations contribution to international peace and security — was more important than ever, amid armed conflict, terrorism, nuclear proliferation and increasing risks for tensions among major powers, he said.  His third priority to support progress in human rights — in governance, rule of law and gender equality, for example — was integral to safeguarding achievements in other fields of intervention, whether security or development related.  Throughout, his goal would be to seek pragmatic and action-oriented outcomes.

Also during his presidency, he said, the Assembly would commemorate on 23 October the entry into force of the United Nations Charter, with other high-level events in April, May and July, respectively, on:  achieving the sustainable development goals; strengthening the United Nations role in peace and security; and implementing the Organization’s work in human rights and related issues.  He would convene a limited number of briefings, thematic debates and consultations with non-State actors, as well as continue work on the United Nations reform agenda.  In all efforts, he would conduct the presidency in a transparent, inclusive and open manner.

It was time to make a new commitment to action, he said, a signal that the Assembly would send throughout the session.  With that in mind, he called on decision-makers to find ways to achieve growth while shrinking the gap between rich and poor, eradicate extreme poverty while delivering more equitable access to — and distribution of — global goods, and cooperate in ways that created the equitable and stable world envisaged by the Charter.

In his congratulatory remarks, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that this year offered an extraordinary opportunity to shape history with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals — the largest campaign against poverty in history — to be reached and a special summit to be held to adopt a new vision for sustainable development that would guide the world for the next 15 years.  “We could not have a better leader,” he said, citing the President-elect’s experience as economist, finance minister and foreign minister.

When Mr. Lykketoft was finance minister, Denmark dramatically exceeded its development assistance target to help even more people struggling against poverty, he said.  About two years ago in Copenhagen, he had met with Mr. Lykketoft, who offered a tour of the Danish Parliament.  “Now he will preside over the General Assembly, our ‘Parliament of Humanity’,” Mr. Ban said.

Sam K. Kutesa (Uganda), President of the sixty-ninth session, also congratulated Mr. Lykketoft, agreeing that the seventieth session would be historic.  With negotiations on the post-2015 agenda and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development at a “critical stage”, redoubled efforts would be needed to ensure successful outcomes.

Also congratulating the President-elect on behalf of regional groups were the representatives of Rwanda (African States), Bahrain (Asia Pacific States), Poland (Eastern European States), Panama (Latin American and Caribbean States) and Finland (Western European and other States), as well as a representative of the United States, on behalf of the host country.

The Secretary-General, in accordance with tradition, then drew lots to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall during the next session.  Tuvalu was picked and would be followed in English alphabetical order by all other countries, with the same order observed in the Main Committees.

The General Assembly also elected by secret ballot 21 Vice-Presidents of its plenary:  Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Eritrea, Mozambique and Togo from the African States; Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Nauru, Republic of Korea and Yemen from the Asia-Pacific States; Azerbaijan from the Eastern European States; Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and Italy from the Western European and other States.  The five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States) serve as Vice-Presidents, as well.

Also today, the Assembly’s six Main Committees, in consecutive meetings, elected their chairpersons and members of their respective Bureaux by acclamation.

The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) elected Karel Jan Gustaaf van Oosterom (Netherlands) as Chair; Abdulaziz Alajmi (Kuwait) and Lachezara Stoeva (Bulgaria) as Vice-Chairs; and Tasha Young (Belize) as Rapporteur.  The Committee also revised its provisional 2015 work programme (document A/C.1/69/CRP.5/Rev.1).

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) elected Andrej Logar (Slovenia) as Chair, as well as Enrique Carrillo Gomez (Paraguay), Purnomo Ahmad Chandra (Indonesia) and Reinhard Krapp (Germany) as Vice-Chairs.  The election of the Committee’s Rapporteur was deferred until a later date.

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) elected Omar Hilale (Morocco) as Chair; Shiraz Arif Mohamed (Guyana), Gregory Dempsey (Canada) and Tamta Kupradze (Georgia) as Vice-Chairs; and Adele Li (Singapore) as Rapporteur.

The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) elected Brian Bowler (Malawi) as Chair; Abdulaziz Aljarralah (Kuwait), Danijel Medan (Croatia) and Jose Eduardo Proaño (Ecuador) as Vice-Chairs; and Clotilde Ferry (Monaco) as Rapporteur.

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) elected Durga Prasad Bhattarai (Nepal) as Chair, and Omar Castaneda Solares (Guatemala), Yotem Goren (Israel) and Bachar Bong Abdallah (Chad) as Vice-Chairs.  Before that action, the representatives of Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran voiced their concern over the nomination of Israel by the Western European and other States, saying that country was not an appropriate choice.  The election of the Committee’s Rapporteur was deferred until a later date.

The Sixth Committee (Legal) elected Eden Charles (Trinidad and Tobago) as Chair; Boris Holovka (Serbia), Andres Kravik (Norway) and Natalie Morris-Sharma (Singapore) as Vice-Chairs; and Idrees Mohammed Ali Saeed (Sudan) as Rapporteur.

The General Assembly will reconvene at a time and date to be announced.