



INVITATION

to a discussion:

“President or Paper Tiger? Strengthening the Role of the President of the UN General Assembly”

on Thursday, May 17, 2018

1:15 – 2:45 pm

Conference Room 8, United Nations

With the participation of:

H.E. Tomas Anker Christensen, former Chef de Cabinet to the 70th and 71st President of the General Assembly

H.E. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the UN

H.E. Vladimir Drobnyak, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the UN

Ms. Bettina Luise Rürup, Executive Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, NY Office

Historically, the President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) used to be in charge of mostly ceremonial tasks. Political impact depended on the individual office holder and much less on the institutional weight of the office. But as the Assembly responds to a wider spectrum of global challenges, expectations regarding its performance and the potential role of its President have increased. For instance, a determined PGA played a key role for the General Assembly to live up to its democratic potential during the selection of the 9th UN Secretary-General. It is time to review and to strengthen the functioning of the Presidency of the General Assembly so that the office as an institution can deliver more effectively on the expectations of UN Member States and the global public. During the discussion event, the former Chef de Cabinet to two subsequent PGAs, H.E. Tomas Anker Christensen, will present his recent study “[President or Paper Tiger? The Role of the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations](#)”. His concrete proposals for the strengthening of the office and the subsequent discussion provide an opportunity for UN Member States to exchange views on the way forward. The event will come at a time when the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the UN General Assembly will be formulating its zero draft for this year’s resolution.

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Light lunch will be served from 12:45 in front of Conference Room 8