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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

**Management Segment
Item 19(f)**

**Introduction of the report of report of the Committee on Economic,
Social and Cultural Rights**

by

**Laura Craciunean-Tatu
Chair
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

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Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to present the report of the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** on its 2023 sessions (E/2024/22), as I address you for the first time in my capacity as Chair of the Committee. I also wish to take the opportunity to thank colleagues in ECOSOC for enabling us to hold this meeting today remotely.

In the report before you, the Committee recalls that, as at 13 October 2023, 171 States were parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Its Optional Protocol on individual communications had 28 States parties. These numbers have stagnated and I would like to invite Members of this Council who have not yet ratified the Covenant, or its Optional Protocol, to consider doing so. I am pleased to note the accession of South Sudan earlier this year, to both the Covenant and the Optional Protocol (*thus, currently 172 and 29 States parties respectively*).

With respect to **the reporting procedure**, firstly, the Committee considered twelve State party reports in 2023. The Committee has a backlog of reports pending review. However, one of its main challenges is the very low level of reporting, along with a lack of meeting time. A considerable number of States parties have not yet engaged with the Committee or are overdue with reporting.

In this regard, I wish to highlight that the Committee has agreed to introduce a predictable review cycle and offer the simplified reporting procedure to all States parties, as soon as this will be possible. For the time being, States are encouraged to continue reporting as per the regular procedure.

This year is decisive regarding the review of General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening. Much has been achieved as a result of that resolution – yet, the treaty bodies remain seriously under-resourced.

Secondly, under its **Optional Protocol**, the Committee continued the consideration of individual communications. Our report outlines the adoption of Views, and cases pending consideration, as well as those declared inadmissible or discontinued/withdrawn. The Committee also considered follow-up to Views. I would like to flag that in 2023, the working group on communications was able to meet during official meeting time, during a one-day meeting before each session, with full conference services. As noted above we regret the stagnation in ratification/accession, as well as the extremely limited number of States accepting the inquiry procedure under the OP-ICESCR.

I invite you to seize the occasion in the context of the treaty body strengthening process to make it possible for the Committee to have the capacity and regular budget resources it needs to fulfill its mandate and engage with all parties to the Covenant in a predictable manner. The need for adequate and regular budget resources and staffing, which could be based on a forward-looking formula to allow for predictable review cycles, was highlighted many times, by the Committees

and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This would apply to the entire Treaty Body system.

Thirdly, focusing on **substantive issues**, the Committee continued to work on General Comments, including notably the draft of the general comment related to sustainable development and the Covenant, for which we had a day of general discussion in 2023. Plans for two more general comments are underway, one related to drug policies and the other to (armed) conflicts – as they relate to the enjoyment of ESCR under the Covenant.

The Committee is focusing very much on matters that are also high on the agenda of States, as the work on the preparation of the Summit of the Future proceeds. Issues related to the human rights economy, social protection, sustainable food systems and integrated approaches to the multiple and overlapping crisis are very much at the center of our focus as we strive to assist States in addressing rising inequalities and exclusion and ensure that No One is Left Behind.

When considering how human rights norms and standards can be a meaningful part of the efforts to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and eradicate poverty in times of multiple crises, the concept of human rights economy offers a valuable vision, acknowledging that economic growth on its own will not redress existing structural injustices. A human rights economy recognizes economic, social and cultural rights for what they are - part of the legal framework and obligations - and as such calls for them to be used when developing economic and social policy making.

Ensuring that the economy actually delivers for all people is essential to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda, to realize economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development, and to leave no one behind. In this regard, the Committee welcomes inclusion in the HLPF inputs synthesis report of the human rights economy framing, which calls for systematically integrating human rights principles and obligations, and SDG commitments, into economic decision-making to yield better outcomes for people and planet.

In the course of its work, the Committee has continuously endeavored to engage with a wide variety of **stakeholders**, including States, National Human Rights Institutions and civil society and we are grateful to all for their engagement. The Committee has also met with other treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council with a view to achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness, harmonization of working methods and to review good practices, as encouraged by the General Assembly (Res 68/268 para. 9).

Thank you for your attention.
