



Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)
President of the Economic and Social Council

Briefing to the UN Human Rights Council

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to address the Human Rights Council today and brief you on the outcomes of this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) held in New York from the 8th to the 17th of July under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

Thousands of representatives from Member States, UN system and stakeholders all actively participated throughout our sessions, including the in-depth reviews of SDG1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals), and the 36 National Review presentations by Member States. These sessions not only highlighted how interlinked the SDGs are, but how closely they are connected to the imperative to fully realize human rights.

The forum recognized **poverty** as one of the greatest global challenges and calling for addressing its root causes and ensuring access to essential services like health, education, and social protection based on human rights principles.

Participants also highlighted the importance of **inclusive growth**. Prioritizing economic sectors that create decent jobs and invest in human capital, particularly for marginalized communities. They recognized the need to reform the



international financial architecture and called for debt alleviation to enable more public spending for sustainable development.

We need a multi-pronged approach to **tackling food insecurity**. That includes respect for biodiversity, diversified food resources, animal welfare, and the reduction of food waste. Participants also called for evidence-based policymaking to enable effective and sustainable investments to strengthen food security and transform nutrition systems.

The forum discussed the links between **climate action and human rights**, with many participants advocating for a just transition to carbon neutrality while ensuring that climate finance commitments are met and scaled up to meet the growing costs of adaptation and mitigation. They also supported nature-based solutions and ecosystem protection.

Strengthening efforts to develop and implement **gender-responsive programmes and policies**, combat gender-based violence, human trafficking, eliminate discriminatory laws these were all key focuses of our discussion. We noted with great concern that women's contributions to sustainable development, peace processes and democratic institutions remain very much under-valued.

And, of course, we discussed the importance of **people-centered justice systems** upholding democracy, the rule of law, and access to justice, including free legal aid and judicial independence, with sustained peace. These were all underscored.

The promotion of **meaningful and equitable youth participation** at all levels, coupled with targeted actions to address the specific needs of children and marginalized communities was also highlighted.

Dear colleagues,

The HLPF really showed us that the international community remains committed to finding inclusive, resilient and science-backed solutions to addressing pressing global challenges and advancing human rights. But with the advent of new solutions and innovations must also come **plans, real plans, concrete plans for implementation and action**.

ECOSOC is the inclusive platform for exactly these outcomes. We bring together actors across different sectors to identify and commit to action that is going to be



transformative and can have a tangible impact in countries and communities. As President of ECOSOC, I am committed to ensuring that we are leveraging these opportunities in an inclusive manner to promote action, ambition, innovation and engagement.

Indeed, one of the key themes of my Presidency will be the crisis of displacement, an issue that is of critical importance to the human rights agenda. We need to ensure that the rights of those on the move are protected and that they are supported by regular migration and by pathways for refugee protection. Other key topics including artificial intelligence, and the international financial architecture. These have to be front and centre, while ensuring at the same time that gender and inclusion are cross-cutting themes across the work of the Council. With targeted outcomes on these issues, we believe the Council will be poised to raise the ambitions for our collective action.

As we all know, Next week, the Summit of the Future will convene at the 79th session of the General Assembly. This is a crucial moment to take forward the progress from the SDG Summit through an action-oriented Pact of the Future with human rights as its core.

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in June 2025 will be another opportunity to help unlock financing flows and investments to close the SDG financing gap, which will without any doubt impact financing for human rights.

And the Second World Summit for Social Development also next year in the fall of 2025, is another critical milestone to promote key social dimensions of sustainable development such as decent work, care and the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable populations, including women, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous peoples.

Excellencies,

I welcome the human rights community to engage in the work of ECOSOC through all of its activities. In turn I want you to know that the Council is here to support the protection and advancement of the principles of human rights.



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I look forward to the outcomes of this session of the Human Right Council, and to work together on an ambitious way forward that best supports countries, communities and constituents to realize the future they deserve.

Thank you so much.