



**Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Bob Rae**

**President of the Economic and Social Council**

Special Meeting of ECOSOC: "Haiti's Children Cannot Wait: Supporting Stability,  
Resilience, and Prosperity in Haiti"

2 December 2024

President of the 79<sup>th</sup> General Assembly,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

I have the honor to convene this special meeting of ECOSOC to bring attention to the urgent and very serious situation facing young people in Haiti.

I would like to warmly welcome the presence His Excellency Philemon Yang, President of the General Assembly. I also acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Representative of Haiti, His Excellency Antonio Rodrigue.

Children and youth -- who make up nearly half of the country's population -- are suffering immensely from the protracted and multifaceted crisis facing Haiti.



They are being exploited, raped, and recruited by armed gangs. They are malnourished and facing famine conditions. They are fleeing their homes due to violence. They are losing the opportunity to learn. They face uncertain futures.

Last year, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which I have the honour to Chair, asked several Haitian youth what messages they wished to share with us, the international community, in New York.

A 17-year-old young man living in Cité Soleil, Port-au-Prince, responded to ask us: “why is it easier for a young person in Haiti to get a gun than it is to get a daily meal?”

Je nous invite à réfléchir à sa question et à nous demander : que pouvons-nous faire, en coordination avec les acteurs haïtiens et à l’appui de ces derniers, pour faire en sorte qu’au cours des semaines, des mois et des années à venir, ce ne soit pas le lot des jeunes en Haïti?

Que faut-il faire maintenant pour donner la priorité aux besoins des enfants et des jeunes, et sur quoi devons-nous travailler à moyen et à long terme pour nous attaquer aux causes profondes de la crise haïtienne?



Comment déployer tous les outils et toutes les ressources dont nous disposons collectivement pour soutenir la prochaine génération en Haïti, afin qu'elle puisse vivre une vie digne, sans violence, sans pauvreté et sans discrimination?

Comment pouvons-nous assurer la coordination de notre soutien aux efforts haïtiens visant à promouvoir la sécurité, la stabilité et la prospérité en Haïti?

We have an excellent line-up of speakers who will help us understand the situation and concrete ways to provide support.

Our first panel will focus on responding to urgent protection and humanitarian needs of children and youth in Haiti.

We will then hear a special message and performance from Jean Jean Roosevelt, UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador for Haiti.

Our second panel will focus on investing in a sustainable future for young people in Haiti.

Thank you.