



Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

Opening of the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum

5 February 2025

It's a great pleasure to welcome everyone here.

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the Economic and Social Council Partnership Forum, which is focusing on the theme *“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”*.

And I'm delighted to call to order this opening meeting.

We will be hearing from a number of speakers this morning and it's going to be a good opportunity for us to share and better understand where we are all coming from and the nature of the challenges we face.

I will have a few comments to make at the beginning and then I will introduce my good friend the Under Secretary-General, Guy Ryder.



This Forum, as you all know, is the first major event of the 2025 ECOSOC calendar and it's a very good occasion to bring our family together. When I say our family, the ECOSOC family includes nation states. It includes academia, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, youth and multilateral organizations and this is a very good demonstration of our common commitment to share the issues we are facing together in the spirit of partnership.

And we do this not simply as a matter of choice because the Charter gives to ECOSOC a particular role in the life of the organization in encouraging the participation of many, many organizations and many people across the full spectrum of economic and social activity of the world, but we do so also as a matter of necessity. We have to do this.

When we think of the challenges we face – climate change, the rapidly advancing pace of technology, conflicts and humanitarian crises – all of these are testing the architecture that we have built to maintain peace and security, to promote sustainable development, and to protect the most vulnerable.

But the fact is we all have an important role. Each of us has a role to play – big or small – in order to give life to the commitments that we have made to one another.



The Pact for the Future, as well as the SDG Political Declaration of 2023, have given us opportunities to define a common vision for multilateral action going forward.

And the word that is at the heart of that vision is the word Partnership. Because it is the Partnerships that really give us the ability to multiply our impact around the world and it allows each of us to go further and to amplify individual efforts and make them collective ones.

You will all be familiar with the saying “If you want to get there faster, you can go it alone. But if you want to go further, you have to do it together.”

And that is not a cliché – it’s actually true. If we want to go further and make our achievements truly sustainable, we can only do it if we move forward in the spirit of solidarity.

As we look forward from this day, there will be key milestones such as the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, the High-Level Political Forum, which will be at the end of July, and the World Social Summit, which will be in Doha in November, to help adjust and plot new actions to make sure that the SDGs are on a better track.

This said, we owe it to ourselves to recognize that we’ve already made some progress and it’s not a matter of the glass only being half empty. It is a matter of understanding that in some areas we’ve made progress.



For example, on SDG3, which will be one of our themes, there has been significant progress. And that's happened because of strong partnerships.

Think of the success we've made in global fight to fight AIDS, to fight tuberculosis, and to fight malaria. We've been able to mobilize over \$65 billion. We've saved more than 50 million lives across 100 countries since 2002. And we've done it by putting our best efforts, not only money to work, but our people to work, our science to work, and our common commitment to make it work. Through effective vaccines and through effective treatment, these diseases are being overcome and we will achieve more success as we go forward by applying the same formula.

And that formula is people working together and harnessing finance in the interests of the public good. It also involves mobilizing networks that include hundreds of organizations, which include hundreds of thousands of people. That's how it works. That's how it succeeds. That's how we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

These are not just abstractions. They're not just numbers in the air. We are saving lives when we put these common resources to work in the most effective and the most efficient manner.



As we force collaboration across sectors and while leveraging the strengths that we share, we can amplify the impact, we can drive progress, and we can in fact ensure that no one is left behind. And so, we have to celebrate our successes, as well as recognize our challenges.

You will hear a lot over the next few months about how far behind we are, how far we are away from our targets – and that is true. But we need to talk more about how we have achieved success and what have been the formulas to achieve success because that helps us to apply those formulas to where we need to go as we move forward.

I'd like to thank the informal Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group for this Forum. I'd like to thank them for the meetings that we've had, and for our ability to work together on creating an exciting agenda for the day.

And I'd like to end by referring to something my predecessor, President Paola Narváez, said when she said that the Council can serve as a unifying platform for everyone to contribute.

Member States, yes. We want to engage the full attention of Member States as we look at these issues. But it's also by involving all of those who have come and who will be with us through the day, representatives of society, in a variety of ways who are critical to actually achieving the goals we want to achieve.



I'm very much looking forward to this day's deliberations and I now have the honour to declare the Partnership Forum officially opened.