



CALL TO ACTION

ECOSOC Special Meeting on Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection

H.E. Mr. Bob Rae, President of the Economic and Social Council

As President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), I convened the *Special Meeting on Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection on April 24, 2025*, to recognize the leadership and innovation of refugee hosting states in fostering resilience and inclusion, and to address the needs of displaced persons and host communities. The meeting showcased the commendable efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations system entities in responding to displacement needs. The event sought to build on the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 and advance the spirit of responsibility sharing that is at the heart of the Global Compact on Refugees.

The world is witnessing an unprecedented crisis of displacement. As of mid-2024, there were approximately 122.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Displacement crises are increasingly protracted, placing a growing strain on host countries and requiring new approaches to support refugees and the communities that so generously host them. The announced reductions of funding by many donor countries are widening the gap between resources and needs. Responses must be transformed from short-term humanitarian interventions to sustainable responses. In doing so, we must continue to promote the meaningful participation of refugees, displaced people, local communities, and host countries, and ensure that all our efforts are informed by our shared experiences.

It is clear that a new paradigm of best practices is emerging. This paradigm is based on the principles of inclusion, work, education, and assistance to both host countries, communities, and those who have been displaced. The agency and rights of all must be recognized.

Addressing the forced displacement crisis is complex. It requires an approach that combines key elements. To that end, I call on all actors to:

- Mobilize and sustain funding to ensure that forcibly displaced persons and host communities receive needs-based life-saving humanitarian assistance and support, as well as the ability to build for the future.
- Strengthen legal, social, and economic frameworks and their implementation to ensure the rights of refugees and displaced people are protected and facilitate their inclusion in host societies.
- Building on the example of many countries, support host countries from the very start of an emergency response to include refugees and displaced persons in national systems, and strengthen their self-reliance through freedom of movement, access to education, formal employment, healthcare, and digital spaces, among others.
- Tackle the underlying causes of forced displacement, such as conflict, persecution, and environmental degradation, through peacebuilding, prevention, and development efforts.





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- Invest in the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees and displaced people who need support with shelter, livelihoods and protection, including through improving inclusion into national systems, to strengthen the sustainability of returns and ensure safety and dignity.
- Align efforts to address forced displacement with the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that inclusion contributes to broader development objectives and benefits local and national economies.
- Enhance the ongoing initiatives that integrate humanitarian, development and peace efforts to support displaced persons and host communities, including by accelerating the actions of development actors.
- Promote agency and leadership of forcibly displaced people and ensure that approaches are enforced by actively involving the voices of refugees and members of host communities, including through the establishment of national refugee advisory mechanisms and supporting refugee-led organizations.
- Call for continued support from international financial institutions for programs that support the inclusion of displaced people and recognize their contributions to local and national economies and to the communities hosting them.
- Adopt a whole-of-society approach and collaboration among Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to promote sustainable solutions to forced displacement.
- Acknowledge the role of the private sector and support their efforts to provide employment opportunities and vocational training to refugees.

Forcibly displaced populations, refugees, host communities, and host governments need our action and solidarity, and we have a unique window of opportunity to step-up our efforts. We must seize it urgently and decisively. We need to find new ways of working together and we must act now.

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