



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

World Press Freedom Day

23 April 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am very honoured to address you all on a day that is exceptionally important to the world: World Press Freedom Day. This year's theme, "Reporting in the Brave New World – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media." These are all critical subjects.

We need to understand that as AI is revolutionizing the world of reporting around the world, it's also important to understand the advantages and disadvantages, the risks and the rewards of the technologies that are surrounding us. We know that AI can not only spread misinformation and dis-information, including through deepfakes, but also produce content that is unlawful, which poses a significant challenge to press freedom.

We also know that it presents us with possibilities. We have to look at where the possibilities are and where the downsides are. We have to understand that journalists have to be able to continue to work, to be



compensated for what they do, and to sustain themselves in this time of extraordinary – not only political challenge – but also technological change.

We are very committed together with journalists, to working closely with those people who value press freedom and who practice it every day.

I want to express my great thanks to UNESCO for its unwavering commitment to this day, but also to the principles for which this day stands, the importance of freedom of expression, which is absolutely essential for all that we do in the field of sustainable development.

We have to commit to a better environment where people can work without fear, and where truth can flourish. We have to be able to navigate this new world and uphold the principles of press freedom that are absolutely essential to our society.

We talk about a brave new world. We talk about a 1984. Let us talk about the fact that these are not manuals for the future – these are warnings about the bad things that can happen that we have to deal with.

Thank you for listening and for watching. Good luck to all of us on World Press Freedom Day.