



Closing Remarks by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

ECOSOC Special Meeting on Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection

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Colleagues,

First of all, I want to thank the High Commissioner. He and I discussed this idea that I had, and he immediately expressed enthusiasm and we've been working hard to develop a program and an approach, which I hope you will have found beneficial in the conversation.

It's been a good conversation. I think it's been useful for us and we've heard some really powerful descriptions of what is actually happening. I just want to reinforce what the High Commissioner just said, where he talked about the fact that there are many, many places where things are happening that perhaps some of you were not aware. I suspect, if I may say so, coming here many of you may not have known, of the profound decision that Mauritania has made to really change the conversation. And I think there are many, many more countries out there that have done this.

I was in Kenya recently, just last week, and I was really struck by the determination of the Government of Kenya to move on and to say we must we must do this differently than other places. I can remember visiting Türkiye, six years ago and finding the same experience when we were looking at what's going on with the humanitarian and displacement situation around the world.

So, thank you everyone. Thank you to all the panelists. Thank you for changing the conversation. Thank you for changing the conversation on refugee, not only



participation, but agency and leadership. Thank you for changing the conversation on work and inclusion and education.

And thank you as well for reinforcing the importance of international obligation. The fact that we need to make sure that everyone is involved in finding a solution and no one should walk away. Yes, it's a shared burden and no one country should share the entire burden, but we must also understand that we need to work together finding solutions to what is going to be a continuing challenge for all of us and I think it's really quite wonderful that we've been able to pull this together.

I also want to thank Leah Zamore in a very personal way because she and I began talking about this issue after I first got here and was expressing an interest to her about how I could become more knowledgeable and also how I could learn more from the educational could the academic community and others who are involved in these issues – and we've stuck with it. So, the words that started as a conversation that started five years ago are continuing.

Thank you all so much. Merci beaucoup à tout le monde.

I will issue my Call to Action tomorrow once I've had a chance to reflect a little more on what've I've heard today.

Thank you so much.