



**Closing Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)**

**President of the Economic and Social Council**

2025 ECOSOC High-level Segment

24 July 2025

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres,

Chers collègues et amis,

Alors que nous clôturons ce segment de haut niveau, je tiens à vous remercier, non seulement pour votre présence, mais aussi pour votre engagement soutenu au cours des deux dernières semaines.

Ces derniers jours, nous avons entendu des voix venues des quatre coins du monde. Des dirigeants et des ministres, certes, mais aussi des scientifiques, des jeunes, des peuples autochtones, de la société civile et du système des Nations Unies. Et leur message a été clair : dans un monde en proie aux divisions, aux perturbations et aux inégalités, la solidarité et le multilatéralisme ne sont pas un luxe ou un simple atout. Ils sont une nécessité.



Nous avons été rappelés à l'ordre : les objectifs de développement durable ne sont pas seulement un cadre ou une liste de contrôle. Ils sont le reflet de notre humanité commune. Ils concernent la dignité, la justice et les opportunités, pour tous, partout dans le monde.

Nous avons vu comment les pays se mobilisent. Les 35 examens nationaux volontaires de cette année nous ont montré ce que le leadership peut accomplir lorsqu'il est ancré dans les réalités locales et motivé par l'appropriation nationale. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de rapports. Ce sont des démonstrations de progrès et des feuilles de route pour l'action.

Mais nous avons également entendu un appel au changement. Un appel en faveur d'une ONU plus efficace, plus responsable et mieux dotée en ressources pour répondre à l'ampleur des exigences actuelles.

Le 80e anniversaire de l'ONU est une étape importante à célébrer. Mais c'est aussi un moment de réflexion et de renouveau. Une occasion de nous demander si nous sommes prêts à faire des choix difficiles et à investir dans la



construction d'un système multilatéral qui nous permettra d'aller de l'avant pour les 80 prochaines années.

La nécessité d'une réforme ne pourrait être plus claire.

Excellencies and friends, all,

In this moment, we are being called not only to look outward but to look inward – to reflect on the systems we uphold and the values we defend as well as the interests that we defend.

The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration was achieved after much hard work, and I give my full congratulations to all delegates as well as to the Representatives from Czechia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. However, it was not achieved without challenges, as we have heard this evening in our deliberations. The fact that it required a vote and a statement of dissociation of certain paragraphs reveal differences of opinion that we must not ignore.

Let's be clear: equality among all of us regardless of gender, race, colour, or creed is foundational to sustainable development, to human rights, and to the credibility of our



multilateral system. There remains an urgent need for dialogue to be renewed, not simply to be taken for granted or seen as a victory for one side or a loss for the other. That's not the best way to proceed. We need courage and leadership as we continuously strive to achieve a wider consensus.

The Charter, whose 80<sup>th</sup> birthday we are celebrating this year, strikes a balance between the rights of sovereign states and the universality of other freedoms and rights, and that is the balance that we must continue to strike.

That is why ECOSOC must lead, as we were told earlier this afternoon. Not just as a platform for dialogue, as it always has been, but also if I may suggest, as a driver of solutions, of implementation, and of results – and let us remember, results especially for those who are the furthest behind. There are so many who today are living in stress, on the edge of poverty, and in the midst of starvation. And we need to understand that our tasks, and our hearts, and our minds must always be with those who are living on the margins.

And we also need to be a place where social policy and science, as well as lived experience, all come together.



Colleagues,

Despite the complexity of this moment, and the emotions of this moment, I close the High-level Segment of the last two weeks with a continuing sense of hope. Not because the path ahead is easy, but because we have all seen what we can do when we work together. And as I've said many times before, what we achieve is never perfection but nevertheless it's a task we must continue to perform in the spirit of constant improvement and deeper listening to each other as we strive to find a deeper understanding.

At a school in Kenya I visited this year, I saw a sign that said these words: "The bridge between hope and achievement is called determination."

And I say to my friends here that when I was doing a little bit of research for this speech, I came across a quote from a former American president who my American colleagues might find it surprising that I would be quoting. Calvin Coolidge said these words that are quite famous: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a



proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

Mr. Churchill said it a little more simply: "When you're walking through hell, it's a good idea to keep going."

My grandmother had an even simpler phrase. She would say: "When you face a problem, take the human footsteps."

And I think that's what we've been doing in the last while. Every day, we strive to take the human footsteps to make the world a better place, a safer place, and a more just place.

I want to thank all of you for your leadership and for the commitment that we share to the United Nations, to the Economic and Social Council, and to a world that is more just, that is more inclusive, and that is more sustainable. Thank you very much.