



Video Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

Resumed 2nd session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

29 May 2025

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

It is a privilege to join you, albeit virtually, at the resumed second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly for this important and timely discussion on sustainable urbanisation and adequate housing.

These subjects sit at the heart of the mandate of the Economic and Social Council, too. As the world continues to become more urban, the fate of sustainable development is directly linked to the fate of cities and human settlements.

This is why, in April 2022, ECOSOC convened a special meeting on “Sustainable urbanization and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” ahead of the one-day High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly to assess the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

Today, we are at a critical juncture for the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals needs all of our commitment, 2026 will mark the mid-point since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016. The UN Secretary-General will present a mid-term review report of the progress, and the UN General Assembly will once again convene a high-level meeting to assess the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

These milestones provide excellent opportunities to critically assess progress toward better urban futures. I trust that your deliberations at this resumed session will advance our collective efforts towards 2026 and beyond.

UN-Habitat’s proposed new Strategic Plan 2026-2029 offers a robust approach to advancing sustainable cities and human settlements, through focus on adequate housing, land and basic services. As the world grapples with the challenges of ensuring access to housing, UN-Habitat’s intention to focus on this is timely and essential.



Housing fundamentally connects to ECOSOC's mission of advancing economic and social development, reducing poverty and inequality, and strengthening the social fabric of our societies.

I see the road to the World Social Summit in Doha in November 2025 as a critical opportunity to position housing where it belongs—at the core of the global social development agenda. To ensure this connection is fully recognised, I will convene a dialogue on Adequate Housing during the High-Level Political Forum as part of the preparatory process for the Social Summit to highlight the importance of integrated approaches—linking housing, land use, infrastructure, and services—to create inclusive and resilient cities.

The World Social Summit is our opportunity to reimagine development and commit to leaving no one behind. My commitment is to work with you and UN-Habitat to ensure that adequate housing and sustainable urbanisation emerge from this process not as an afterthought, but fully recognised for its role in building inclusive, just, and resilient societies.

Thank you and best of luck in your proceedings.