



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

President of the Economic and Social Council

Social Rights: Building Social Justice and Democratic Stability

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Colleagues, partners, and friends,

We gather at a pivotal moment. The convergence of global crises – economic inequality, democratic backsliding, climate disruption – has exposed the fragility of our social fabric. But it has also reaffirmed a fundamental truth: social rights are not peripheral to development – they are foundational.

The Council of Europe and the European Economic and Social Committee have rightly framed this conference around the linkages between social justice and democratic stability. These are not parallel goals. They are mutually reinforcing. Where social rights are protected – where people have access to decent work, healthcare, education, and housing – democracy is more resilient, and societies are more cohesive.

As we look toward the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha in November, we must ask: how do we move from aspiration to implementation? How do we ensure that the commitments enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, the La Hulpe Declaration, and the SDGs translate into real change for real people?

Today's session, focused on partnerships for progress, underscores a critical truth: no single institution, government, or region can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals alone. Multilateral cooperation must be more than a diplomatic exercise. It must be a mechanism for aligning legal standards, mobilizing resources, and scaling successful models. ECOSOC, the Council of Europe, and the EU each bring unique tools to this task. But our impact will be measured by our ability to act in concert.

This session's focus on partnerships is therefore not just timely – it is essential. We must build coalitions that are inclusive, particularly of youth and marginalized communities. We must invest in data, monitoring, and accountability. And we must embed social rights into the architecture of sustainable development – not as an afterthought, but as a prerequisite.



Let us use this moment to reaffirm our shared commitment: that no one should be left behind—not in rhetoric, but in reality. The road to Doha must be paved with action, not just ambition.

Thank you to the Council of Europe and the European Economic and Social Committee for convening this important dialogue.