

2025 ECOSOC Management Segment

Item 20(f). Introduction of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on economic, social and cultural rights

Statement by Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

29 July 2025

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to present the latest report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which outlines the expanding scope of our work to support Member States, strengthen institutions, and build partnerships to realize economic, social and cultural rights in law, policy and practice.

Let me begin with a core message: these rights are not aspirational – they are essential to human dignity. They are fundamental to the universal human rights framework, integral to the right to development, and central to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Amid deepening inequality, poverty, climate, human rights and humanitarian crisis, these rights must anchor our collective response.

OHCHR's 2024-2027 Management Plan identifies a shift towards a "human rights economy" as a strategic priority — one that aligns economic policies with human rights obligations, addresses systemic inequalities, and places dignity and sustainability at the heart of decision-making.

Despite resources constraints, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has significantly enhanced its capacity to catalyse this shift and advance economic, social and cultural rights.

First, the Office has intensified field-level engagement. Through technical assistance and policy dialogue in countries from the Congo to Jordan, Bangladesh to Honduras, we are working to ensure that national budgets, social protection systems, and land governance policies uphold the rights to education, health, housing, work, and an adequate standard of living.

Our new Knowledge Hub on economic, social and cultural rights supports this work by promoting good practices, peer learning, and national capacity-building.

Second, the Office has broadened multi-stakeholder partnerships. From co-hosting the World Human Rights Cities Forum, in the Republic of Korea, to regional dialogues with national human rights institutions and civil society in Latin America, Africa and Europe, duty bearers and rights holders are empowered to advance these rights at the local and community level, where they matter most.

Third, OHCHR is working to integrate human rights, including the right to development, into international policy and cooperation.

It has contributed to shaping enabling frameworks through the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, and the upcoming Second World Summit on Social Development and the

negotiations towards a framework convention on international tax cooperation.

The Office is also advocating for rights-based care and support systems, tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality, and promoting a fairer debt architecture that supports inclusive and sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

Despite progress, rising demands and liquidity constraints risk undermining our ability to sustain and scale up our efforts. The Office urges Member States to reinforce political and financial support, enabling OHCHR to strengthen its presence at regional and country level to better deliver targeted, effective assistance.

Realizing economic, social and cultural rights is not only a legal duty but also a political and moral imperative. It means putting dignity at the heart of economic life and ensuring no one is left behind — not in words, but in action.

OHCHR stands ready to help make this a reality.

Thank you.