



ECOSOC Special Meeting

Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

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Opening Remarks

by

H.E. Lachezara Stoeva, President of the Economic and Social Council

President of the General Assembly,
Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide,
President of the Human Rights Council,
Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants and Delegates,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on “*Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity*”.

The commitment to leave no one behind, a core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015, recognizes our collective understanding of the *dignity and worth of the human person* as referenced in the opening paragraphs of the United Nations Charter.

This is also the foundation of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity which was affirmed for the first time by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit.



Excellencies,

The 2030 Agenda and the responsibility to protect, adopted in 2005 require that all of us do everything we can to put in place the enabling environment that would ensure that the dignity and worth of each and every human being is acknowledged and respected.

Consistent with the Charter mandate of ECOSOC, this means addressing the economic, social, cultural, educational, health needs of people everywhere, seeking to reach the furthest behind first. The work that we do as members of ECOSOC is also human-rights based as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both SDG 10, on eliminating inequalities, and SDG 16, on promoting access to justice and building effective institutions, provide entry points to enhance the interlinkages among peace and development. They call for policies aimed at targets such as reducing all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere, ensuring responsive, participatory and representative decision-making at the national level and promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies. Protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights, including socio economic rights, also underpins the 2030 Agenda and is critical to addressing the root causes of conflicts and to making communities more inclusive and resilient.

So is implementing the 2030 Agenda in its entirety. Combatting poverty and food security, ensuring equal access to health, education, basic infrastructure and land for all communities and people for example, are also means to prevent violence and conflict. This requires adequate financing to provide the necessary fiscal space to States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and overcome today's multiple crises.

Stating our commitment to the 2030 Agenda is simply not enough. Today's global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, climate change and protracted conflicts around the world, are undermining our progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and reversing gains made. These challenges require reinvigorated multilateralism and a stronger United Nations. It requires us to engage with all stakeholders, including young people and women, to promote social progress, better living standards and human rights for all.

As we prepare to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, drafted by ECOSOC's Commission on Human Rights in 1948, the Council can and must do more. Even as the Human Rights Council (HRC) has taken on the responsibilities of the Council's former Commission since 2006, ECOSOC still



retains oversight of the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). This Committee, which reports to ECOSOC annually, monitors how the rights elaborated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are being implemented at the national level. The Covenant explicitly states that these rights should be exercised without discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. This too is the foundation for peaceful societies and preventing conflicts and atrocity crimes.

Excellencies,

Our distinguished speakers will be sharing their views and ideas to challenge us to think outside the box on how to address social and economic causes to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. They will also share proposals on how the United Nations and the international community can better assist States in protecting their populations in line with the responsibility to protect (RtoP).

I look forward to a fruitful discussion.
