



Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

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Distinguished Chair and Members of the Committee for Development Policy,
Under-Secretary-General, Colleagues,

I am very pleased to join you at this opening session of the Committee for Development Policy.

Over the years, the Committee has been a steady and important source of policy guidance and expert knowledge for the Economic and Social Council and the entire United Nations membership. We will need your help going forward in thinking through these critical issues.

We meet under difficult global conditions, with challenges that cannot be solved on a country-by-country basis. These conditions impose on us a need to think critically about our current policy approach – not only in theory, but in the delivery and in how policy works in the field. The assumptions we have applied in the past must be changed and adapted to suit the current context.

The reality is that we are likely entering a period where financing dollars will be scarcer than they have been – and will be scarcer depending on the decisions of Member States in working together. For many developing economies, especially those facing mounting burdens of debt, there can be no possibility of an ‘investment push’ for the SDGs without significant changes – which is an objective we all share. We must focus on better ways to assist and support, to reach more people, to redesign programs to ensure they reach those who need them.



This year's FfD4 conference and its outcome document give us an opportunity to help draw what the next years will look like. Member States will need to under promise and overdeliver. They have the habit of doing the exact opposite, which creates mistrust and a lack of confidence in their ability to respond effectively. In this respect, I have been working hard to bring the IFIs and New York closer together. A meeting of Ambassadors next week in Washington will be an opportunity to discuss in concrete terms the FfD4 outcome document with the Banks. The FfD4 co-facilitators have been generous in integrating the debates we have here into the outcome document.

Member States will also have an opportunity at the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha in November to agree on new commitments to address deep inequalities, persistent poverty, growing vulnerabilities and a paucity of decent work. Leaving these un-addressed will only worsen the many crises we are confronting, including population displacement and forced migration.

I commend the CDP for considering FfD4 and the World Social Summit in its work plan for this year. I also look forward to your contributions towards the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July.

Colleagues,

As initial conversations begin on sustainable development priorities beyond 2030, let me highlight two aspects.

The first is the need for continuing improvements in the procedures and methods for graduation from the LDC category, as well as in how LDCs are supported throughout their journey to graduation and beyond. Many countries are reluctant to graduate because the process is difficult, but we need to work on that. I am



very pleased you are already working on this and that the General Assembly has provided additional resources to the Secretariat for your enhanced monitoring mechanism.

The second is the necessity to ensure that the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence is a force for inclusion and improvements in the well-being of all. We have to accelerate the speed of integration of AI into the work we do. We need to bridge the digital divide and make sure that those who were left behind in the digital revolution are not left behind in the AI revolution.

Later this spring, in line with my priorities for this ECOSOC Presidency, I plan to convene two special meetings of the Council. The first will be held on 24 April to address issues related to Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection. I hope to have another meeting in June in Geneva that brings together IOM and UNHCR. The second will be held on 6 May to discuss how AI could be better harnessed to support the SDGs, including in developing countries. I would like to invite you to attend these two meetings.

I look forward to the Committee to continue to apply its technical and analytical expertise towards resolving some of the major challenges to countries' development progress and trust that your recommendations will find full reflection in the conclusions of the HLPF and other fora that will be convened by ECOSOC during the current year.

Thank you.