

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS TO THE 54TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

New York, 8 February 2016

Mr. Chairman, (Your Excellency Ambassador Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania and Chair of the Bureau of Commission for Social Development)

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address the Commission for Social Development - the first of the functional commissions of ECOSOC to meet following a very busy and historic 2015.

In my first address to the General Assembly this year, I noted that 2015 was a year of global action – 2016 must be a year of national traction for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The work of this Commission affects the lives of 1.2 billion young people, more than 900 million older persons and 1 billion persons with disabilities around the globe, among many others.

Your work will be crucial in ensuring that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs truly leave no one behind.

I commend the Commission for its priority theme “Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World.”

Experience has shown that a thriving economy is not enough to eradicate poverty and promote shared prosperity. Economies must be put at the service of people, through effective integrated social policies.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Commission is among the oldest of the ECOSOC functional commissions.

Over the years, you have done much to highlight the human dimension of international development efforts.

You have shed light on the role of proactive social policies in securing economic and environmental stability, promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty and inequality.

Enormous social progress has been made – in lifting people out of extreme poverty; in boosting food security; in advancing universal primary education and adult literacy; in promoting women’s empowerment, and in reducing maternal and child mortality.

Accessibility and the full-inclusion of persons with disabilities has become a growing interest of decision makers – as has the critical importance of ensuring social protection for all.

Now we need to build on these successes.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are living in a world of turmoil and trouble.

There may be fewer wars between countries, but there is more insecurity.

Inequality remains too high, affecting poverty reduction efforts and social cohesion in both developed and developing countries.

Too many people continue to face exclusion and are unable to realize their full potential.

Too few economies have attained inclusive and sustainable growth and are unable to promote true social progress.

People are frustrated.

They are working harder and falling behind.

Too often, instead of decisions, they see deadlock. And they wonder: are leaders even listening?

The 2030 Agenda answers with a triumphant “yes”.

The 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, answer with a triumphant “yes”.

Yes, we will end global poverty by 2030.

Yes, we will leave no one behind.

Yes, we will build a life of dignity for all on a healthy planet.

I know we can do it.

Your continued policy guidance will be crucial.

We, in the UN system stand ready to assist you, the Member States, to achieve the goals you have set. We will continue to work closely with civil society, critical players in giving life to our shared vision.

In this spirit, I recently submitted my report to the General Assembly on the critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

This report was prepared in response to paragraph 90 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and done so in consultations with Member States.

Its objective is to help Member States ensure that global follow-up and review is anchored in the realities of people's lives and builds on effective reviews at the national and regional levels.

It examines in greater depth how the high-level political forum on sustainable development could work.

It reflects on how it can rally all international intergovernmental platforms within the UN system and beyond around the 2030 Agenda, instil coherence in their work and derive political guidance from their conclusions.

It aims to clarify the respective roles of the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC and its functional commissions, and other platforms.

It underlines that we should work in each and every platform to integrate the SDGs and reflect the principles of the Agenda.

In all these efforts, the work of the Commission for Social Development will be critical.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address you today. I look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations.

Thank you.