



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventy-eighth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 31st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 8 September 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Lee (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)
later: Ms. Saran (Chair)

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary Chair** declared open the seventy-eighth session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General

2. **Mr. Korkeakivi** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that it was encouraging that, despite the liquidity crisis that continued to beset the United Nations, two sessions had been approved for each treaty body in 2025. However, the shortening of the Committee's seventy-eighth session had unfortunately necessitated the postponement of one State Party review. It was very likely that the difficult financial situation would continue to hamper the planning and implementation of the treaty bodies' work for the foreseeable future.

3. In February 2025, Albania had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, bringing the total number of ratifications to 31. Regrettably, current events and modern challenges were affecting the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and of human rights in general, around the world, even as incremental progress continued to be made towards universal ratification of the Covenant and the Optional Protocol.

4. The Committee was poised to adopt its draft general comment on economic, social and cultural rights and the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in his statement to the annual panel discussion on adverse impacts of climate change, held during the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, had urged States to commit to addressing those impacts and emphasized the centrality of the Covenant in efforts to achieve a just transition to renewable sources of energy.

5. In July 2025, the International Court of Justice, in its landmark advisory opinion on obligations of States in respect of climate change, had invoked the Committee's work, noting, *inter alia*, that article 12 of the Covenant protected the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and that the Committee's general comment No. 14 (2000) underscored the fact that that right required States to refrain from unlawfully polluting air, water and soil.

6. In its resolution 79/165 on the human rights treaty body system, the General Assembly had invited the treaty bodies and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to work to increase coordination and predictability in the reporting process, with the aim of achieving a clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties, and to increase their efforts to further the use of digital technologies in their work. It had not, however, endorsed the proposals, or the corresponding resources, presented in the context of the treaty body strengthening process, including the proposal for a predictable schedule of reviews.

7. At their annual meeting, in June 2025, the Chairs of the treaty bodies had agreed that the liquidity crisis facing the United Nations was a symptom of a deeper crisis gripping the multilateral system and had called for Committees to consider adopting a number of urgent measures to ensure the continuity of their work as provided for in the human rights treaties. They had recommended that priority be given to aligning modalities of interaction with stakeholders and called on the General Assembly to explicitly authorize the use of online or hybrid discussions with stakeholders during official meeting time.

The public part of the meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

Election of the Chair and other officers of the Committee

8. **Ms. Lee** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that Ms. Saran had been elected as Chair of the Committee. In addition, Mr. Caunhye, Mr. Adilov and Mr. Palmisano had been elected as Vice-Chairs. The election of a Rapporteur would take place at a later date.

9. *Ms. Saran took the Chair.*

Adoption of the agenda ([E/C.12/78/1](#))

10. *The agenda was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 11.35 a.m.