



COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development



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63rd Session of the Commission for Social Development

Ministerial Forum

on

Strengthening solidarity and social cohesion

Tuesday, 11 February 2025, 10.00–11.30, Conference room 4, UNHQ

Concept Note



1. Background

Since the World Summit on Social Development in 1995, remarkable progress has been achieved in key social development goals. However, many of these development gains have been uneven and fragile. Progress towards the eradication of poverty has lately stalled, income and wealth inequality remains at persistently high levels and decent work is in short supply. These developments, together with global megatrends and ongoing intersecting crises, hamper social inclusion. Governments need to tackle these challenges, but trust in them is in decline in many countries, weakening social cohesion and limiting the effectiveness of social policies.

Key to addressing these challenges is strengthened solidarity and social cohesion. Social cohesion is the “glue” that binds societies together. It contributes to increasing the effectiveness of social policies and enables better development outcomes. Governments can promote social cohesion by advancing social inclusion, its most important component. In cohesive societies, people tend to trust others and public institutions are often perceived as accountable, transparent, capable and legitimate.

Strengthening social cohesion requires an integrated policy strategy that addresses social policy gaps and promotes inclusive, transparent and accountable governance. At the heart of such an agenda lies an effective tax system, predictable and adequate income security, affordable health care, quality education and decent jobs. It is mainly through these policies that upward mobility, inclusion and social progress are promoted.

Inclusion supports greater trust in Government, leading to greater willingness of citizens to pay taxes necessary for financing essential public services. The effectiveness of public

policies depends on people’s trust in their Governments. People are less likely to trust Governments that are perceived as corrupt, opaque or non-responsive to their needs. Alongside measures to promote a healthy information environment and combat mis- and disinformation, citizen participation can boost trust in Governments and consequently social cohesion. A strengthened multilateralism is crucial to deliver on social development goals and the upcoming Second World Summit on Social Development is an opportunity to generate consensus on the actions needed to achieve it.

The Commission for Social Development will convene its sixty-third session from 10 to 14 February 2025. On 11 February, a ministerial forum will be convened from 10.00 to 11.30, focusing on *Strengthening solidarity and social cohesion*.

2. Objective and structure

The forum will provide an opportunity for delegates and other stakeholders to interact with ministers and senior officials from Member States. Its main objective is to address actions and policies to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity to achieve social development goals. Panellists will discuss questions such as: How to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity at the national and local levels? What actions and policies are needed in a context of overlapping crises to regain momentum towards poverty eradication, social inclusion and decent work? What are some good practices for promoting solidarity, participation and transparency in policymaking to increase trust in Governments?

Panellists are invited to structure their 12-minute presentations around recent activities, lessons learned and policy recommendations. The outcome of the discussion will be reflected in the Chair’s summary as part of the inputs from the Commission for Social Development to ECOSOC’s high-level segment and the 2025 High-Level Political Forum and the Second World Summit for Social Development.

Proposed time allocation for the panel discussion

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Moderator: Remarks and introduction	5 minutes
Panellists: Presentations	10 minutes per panellist
Q & A: From the floor	20 minutes
Panellists: Concluding remarks	2 minutes per panellist
Moderator: Summary and conclusion	5 minutes