

STATEMENT by Secretary of State Doru Costea.
ROMANIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. President, Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by conveying our appreciation for the excellent organization of this event by our esteemed hosts, as well as our congratulations for the work done by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland and the Co-chairs (Australia, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, India, Haiti, Hungary, Malawi, Slovenia) for the constructive manner in which they have led the negotiations on the outcome documents of the Conference.

Less than one year from the High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in New York, we have gathered in Istanbul for demonstrating our solidarity and responsibility in supporting the Least Developed Countries' efforts to pull out from poverty. We think that it is our common duty to identify the appropriate solutions for eliminating poverty as well as hunger on the basis of the huge potential of these countries in terms of natural and human resources.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries is taking place in a different context than the one in Brussels, in 2002. It is true that, despite important progresses in many countries and regions, the situation in the Least Developed Countries remains difficult, especially given the recent years of economic slowdown in many parts of the world, multiple crises with strong international impact: the financial crisis, the food crisis affecting the Least Developed Countries, climate change challenges as well as significant changes in the global aid architecture.

All the more importance is, therefore, now attached to this Conference, which brought us together in order to give a new impetus to the partnership between the Least Developed Countries, their development partners, development actors worldwide. Romania is confident that the Istanbul Action Programme shall serve as a comprehensive and balanced framework built on the shared and differentiated responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Romania strongly supports the EU commitment to collectively meeting the target of 0.15 to 0.20% of GNP to the Least Developed Countries and reaffirms the importance that other donors match these commitments and that emerging economies provide their fair share of assistance to the Least Developed Countries.

In 2007, Romania became a donor of official development assistance (ODA). The areas of priority for our development cooperation policy, all converging toward its primary objective and MDG number 1, the reduction of poverty in developing countries, are: economic development, enhancing democracy and rule of law, good governance, education, health, infrastructure and the fight against the effects of climate change in developing countries.

Romania is an active promoter of effective multilateralism and supports the pivotal role of the United Nations in global governance. Out of the total ODA committed to date, more than one third has been channelled through multilateral organizations, mainly UN agencies (UNDP, UNFCCC, UNHCR, UNFPA, the Global Environment Facility for Least Developed Countries), through the European Commission, OECD, IBRD.

The successful outcome of the Istanbul Conference, that takes due account of the current global challenges in a positive manner, is essential to the establishment, at global level, of a favourable environment for sustainable development and for the renewed partnership between the Least Developed Countries and their partners.

Thank you