



MINISTERUL MUNCII  
ȘI PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE

**Fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Population and Development**

**Agenda Item 3 - General Debate**

**STATEMENT**

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**Mr. Chair,**  
**Your Excellences,**  
**Distinguished Delegates,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have the honour to participate today at the general debate of the 54<sup>th</sup> (fifty fourth) session of the Commission on Population and Development, focusing on the special theme "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development".

Not only has this important topic been one-year delayed the Covid-19 pandemic, but it presents itself even more relevant to our context. The Covid-19 pandemic presented all of us with new global challenges requiring for new solutions and strengthen solidarity and international cooperation.

Romania welcomes the special theme of the current session of the Commission on Population and Development and would like to thank the Bureau, the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the preparatory work of this session.

I will continue now emphasizing some important elements regarding the special theme of this year in my national capacity.

**Distinguished delegates,**

### **Social inclusion, reduction of poverty and gender equality**

A wide range of policies and programs witness Romania's commitment to the population and development agenda. Addressing poverty, social exclusion and advancing gender equality are among of our Government top priorities.

The Government's Programme 2020-2024 assumes that gender-responsive social and economic measures will be taken to support women and girls in vulnerable situations, including those at risk of losing their jobs, at risk of living in poverty or facing poverty at work.

In recent years, Romania has intensified its efforts to implement integrated and coordinated strategic measures and actions that will lead to poverty reduction and increasing social inclusion of vulnerable people. We can see clearly a decrease in at risk of poverty and social exclusion rate from 2017 to 2019, but this is not enough.

The Covid-19 pandemic puts pressure on our health and social services system, deepens the risk of poverty and marginalization and inequalities, challenging economies and



pushes us fast-forward to think resilient systems and to find best measures to protect our nationals and in solidarity and cooperation to assist other nations.

Currently, Romania drafted two horizontal strategies - a National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction post 2020 (2021-2027) and a National Strategy for Equal Opportunities post 2020. The National Strategy for Promoting Active Ageing 2014-2020 is set to be reviewed and renewed.

### **Poverty reduction**

The National Strategic Policy Framework for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for 2021 -2027:

- supports the efforts and global commitment of the Romanian Government undertaken for the sustainable development of Romania in the 2030 horizon, and aims **to ensure a fair, dignified and prosperous life for its inhabitants, providing the general framework for achieving social cohesion and combating the complex challenges posed by poverty and social exclusion and exacerbated by the economic crisis in the context of the Covid pandemic**, with a special attention to the inclusion of vulnerable groups.
- is in line with the national objectives assumed for the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy (through the National Reform Program) and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the recommendations of the European Semester process in the field of poverty and social exclusion, in line with the principles and rights enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- sets out in its Action Plan for 2021-2027 a general objective that proposes that, by 2027, the number of people exposed to risk poverty or social exclusion to be reduced by at least 7% compared to 2020.
- There are four strategic specific objectives aiming at: a. **A decent living for all, by combating the transitional situations of monetary poverty, with an emphasis on ensuring adequate amounts** (salaries, pensions and social benefits) of income to cover the basic needs of population and access to quality social services and services of general public interest, social and economic participation of vulnerable groups, corporate social responsibility, development of public-public and public-private partnerships; b. **social investments** to promote cohesion through **education and employment**, c. **lifelong social protection through access to housing, medical services and integrated social services** for independent living; and d. **improving administrative capacity for policy coordination** at national level in accordance with European requirements, by applying the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and other European regulations.

The draft Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction post 2020 (2021-2027) envisages ensuring the constant increase of low incomes, allowances for children, young



people, support for single-parent families, allowances for dependent elderly people and people with disabilities, social benefits for other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. It also proposes to provide basic material assistance for the most disadvantaged people: food, hygiene products, childcare items, school support package, hot meals.

Completing the minimum inclusion income reform is on the Government's agenda.

### **Gender equality**

In terms of creating equal opportunities between women and men, the Government's priorities regard promoting women's participation in the labor market, including access to childcare and dependent services, as well as fighting domestic violence. The Government's Programme 2020-2024 proposes:

- integrating the perspective of women's rights in the processes of elaborating public policies; ensuring the representation of women at all levels of the political decision-making process;
- prevention of all forms of violence against women and the implementation of the law and additional prevention strategies, as well as the widespread provision of specialized support and protection services for victims to have access to;
- support measures and actions to improve women's access to sexual and reproductive health services and inform them of their rights and available services.

The draft National Strategy for Equal Opportunities 2021 – 2027 aims to:

- continuing the public policies of the Romanian Government to promote the principle of equal opportunities and treatment between women and men at national level and to prevent and combat domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence;
- ensure correlation with the policies of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Organization for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women), the Multiannual Action Plan on Promoting Gender Equality within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - Dimension Human Rights (HDIM), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Recommendation of the Council of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Gender Equality in Public Life (No. C) 2015) 164), in the areas of equal opportunities between women and men and the prevention and combating of domestic violence and violence against women;
- ensure implementation of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Governments's Programme envisages continuous improvement of the quality of medical services and improvement of the population's health, such as **support measures and**



**actions to improve women's access to sexual and reproductive health services and inform them of their rights** and available services.

### **Food security, nutrition and sustainable development**

Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 aims at developing a sector sustainable and competitive agri-food for **improving the quality of life and insurance close to living conditions in rural areas of those in the urban environment, promotion local and ecological production and capitalization of traditional and mountain products** with added value.

The Strategy acknowledges that:

- The cases of malnutrition detected in children up to 14 years old, coming mainly from disadvantaged or vulnerable environments, registered a slight decrease, still remaining at over 3,000 per year. The situation has prospects for improvement after the introduction of the Community healthcare mechanism to improve access and inclusion (nurses and health mediators).

Through its assumed Programme, our Government is committed, in line with EU Common Agriculture Policy, to fostering **a smart, resilient and diversified agricultural sector that ensures food security, enhanced environmental protection and climate change mitigation**, in line with EU objectives, as well as strengthening socio-economic relations and services in rural areas.

This is by promoting a smart, resilient and diversified agricultural sector that ensures food security; strengthening market orientation and increasing competitiveness; improving the position of farmers in the value chain.

There are envisaged three important projects such as the **water management strategy**; creation of a **national network of centers for collection, storage, processing and distribution of Romanian products**; financing of agricultural associations, covering expenses for establishment and operation and launching lines dedicated to them for the **development of warehouses (food hubs)**.

Only to provide several examples of **social protection policies**, that enable the **access to basic products (including food) and rights**:

- The Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Education implementing the EU Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) in Romania, through a Program that contributes to strengthening social cohesion and reducing extreme poverty through the **distribution of staple foods, school supplies for children, newborn kits, clothing and footwear and hygiene products to the most disadvantaged people**. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection supported



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to including also the **persons who were isolated at home or in quarantine or had travel restrictions because of Covid-19 pandemic.**

- the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
  - **Increase the coverage and quality of social services, including that of integrated community services**, by piloting with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education integrated social services in the marginalized communities (139 rural and small urban marginalized communities) and investing in Social Assistance Professionals to increase the administrative capacity of SPAS.
  - **Access to social assistance benefits (integrated with social services)**
    - State allowance for children; Placement allowance; Family support allowance; Monthly allowance for raising children; The insertion stimulus; Allowances and aids for raising a child granted to persons (adults / children) with disabilities; The monthly allowance related to the accommodation leave; Monthly HIV / AIDS food allowance; Social aid (Guaranteed minimum income); Emergency aid; Aid for refugees; Support for heating; Allowances granted to people with disabilities.
- the Ministry of National Education has developed national programs to facilitate access to schools, especially for rural students, consisting of ensuring free transportation and providing food and supplies.
- the Ministry of Health runs a national program for community health care and it aims at ensuring access to primary and emergency medicine in hard-to-reach and isolated areas by carrying out a program to cover health services for the disadvantaged population, regardless of the area in which they are located.

### **Nutrition**

The Government intends to creating and promoting a culture of prevention among the population from school level - introducing health education in schools / health education classes on the acquisition of first aid measures, as well as attracting children to volunteer activities in the field of health.

Also, a Food traffic lights system is envisaged through the implementation of the Nutri-Score color labeling system (from red to green depending on the content of saturated fats, salt, free sugars, proteins and dietary fiber).

The Government's Programme proposes a Voucher Program for pregnant women, providing them with access to vitamins, food for the fetus, free public transport during pregnancy based on a medical certificate, monitoring of the free test set, home counseling visits from community nurses / doctor pediatrician, in the first months of the child's life.



### **International Development cooperation**

In terms of its **Multiannual Programme for international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in the period 2020-2023**, Romania assumes cross-border cooperation (i.e. Black Sea and Western Balkans) and regional strategies that represent development opportunities through investments aimed at economic growth and security, as well as through the use of common resources - transport, energy, **water, agriculture, food security, rural development**, tourism, protection and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage, disaster risk reduction and disaster management.

#### **Mister Chair,**

Romania's priority is to provide all citizens with an equal opportunity to participate in society, where their basic needs are met and their differences respected, and where all people feel valued and can live in dignity.

Romania is firmly committed to support the achievement of the ICPD Program of Action, the Beijing Platform of Action and achieving the SDGs. We support the adoption of the draft resolution on the special theme of the 54<sup>th</sup> session.

Thank you for your attention.