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STATEMENT

**By H.E. Mr. Lazăr COMĂNESCU
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**High Level Meeting on addressing large movements of refugees
and migrants**

Plenary meeting

New York, 19 September 2016

*Mr. President of UNGA 70,
Mr President of UNGA 71,
Mr. Secretary General,*

Migration is as old as human civilization. Yet movements internally and across borders have grown dramatically and will continue to do so in an increasingly globalized world. With the unprecedented number of conflicts and crisis worldwide, large-scale mixed flows are becoming a frequent phenomenon. New trends are also emerging with the rise of environmental problems associated with climate change and natural disasters.

The reasons for people moving are diverse and most often inter-linked, requiring a multi-faceted, visionary approach which goes far beyond the immediate humanitarian and security needs. Moreover, given the inherently transboundary nature of international migration, **no country can deal with this challenge in isolation**.

During the last years, migration has become the subject of growing international discussion and cooperation. However, we are still far from reaching clear consensus on how to act *collectively* to achieve basic goals such as reducing illegal migration, eliminating deaths along the transit routes and combating smuggling.

The meeting of today is indeed an opportunity to work for more cohesive approach in dealing with large movements of refugees and migrants by reinforcing existing frameworks and developing innovative ways of action. We have agreed to **focus on large movements**, but our strategy must be framed within the larger debate on the **interlinkages between migration and development**, as well as the ongoing efforts of **improving the international aid architecture**.

We should not forget that today's Summit follows several international initiatives in this area, including the first ever **World Humanitarian Summit**. We need to build on the pledges made to address the underlying causes and to foster the collective actions to address refugee and migration crisis.

Mr. President,

By setting out a range of principles, commitments and understandings, **the Political Declaration of New York** lays a solid ground for strengthened international cooperation based on **international solidarity and shared responsibility**. *Romania pledges its constructive engagement in the follow-up work towards adopting the Global Compacts in 2018.*

As we collectively commit to improving global governance of migration, **Romania warmly welcomes the agreement to include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) into the UN family**, building on a long history of close working ties. As the global lead agency on migration, IOM can bring a rich expertise to the UN table, given that migration is more than ever at the heart of international politics. We trust that the IOM's potential will be fully utilized during the upcoming negotiations to develop a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Migration was recognized as enabler of inclusive growth in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. In order to translate this assertion into the national development

plans we need to **showcase the evidence base** to guide the policy-making process and allow for a correctly informed public dialogue.

Changing the narrative on migration by countering stereotypes, managing the expectations and rallying support around a set of shared values are key to adjusting our increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies to the changing global landscape. This will not be an easy or short-lived task, especially against the backdrop of mounting security concerns, ongoing economic strife and an upsurge of populist and xenophobic rhetoric. One of the most effective ways for combating discrimination is through education, both at home and at school.

Whilst we seek to maximize its benefits, we should not downplay the hurdles and costs of migration either, especially the so-called desperation migration. The anxieties of the local population need to be acknowledged and addressed in a fair manner. All implications at national level have to be considered appropriately, while recognizing **the absence of a “one-size fits all” model** in tackling this issue. The measures combatting discrimination should include both the sanctioning of such acts and awareness raising in this field of combating racism and xenophobia.

Romania believes in a **holistic comprehensive approach that takes into account both the consequences and the root causes of the phenomenon**. Neither a comprehensive refugee response, nor well-managed migration policies can be sustained on the long run, if the root causes of such movements are not addressed, including through genuine efforts aimed at conflict prevention and resolution.

Migration cannot be dealt in isolation of other global issues. While the instruments of action are diverse and rely on the cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, only the implementation of all relevant provisions of the 2030 Development Agenda has the potential of truly transforming current dynamics.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Europe is experiencing a migratory challenge of unprecedented magnitude which requires resolute action and long-term strategy. The answer can only be cooperation and joint action of all Member States, bearing in mind the respect for fundamental principles and values.

As we aim for sustainability, it is also important to have a genuine discussion on the practical applicability of our collective plans. Major institutional and cultural changes cannot happen overnight, whereas immediate measures are indeed required to cope with the unfolding crisis at the EU borders and in the frontline countries.

Romania has been and will continue to be part of the European response. **Although we did not experience any major influx of displaced people (neither refugees nor migrants)**, we have supported, in the spirit of solidarity, the efforts at EU level and we will continue to act in a principled way.

We will continue to support solutions that combine innovative humanitarian, development and economic instruments, supported by political dialogue and partnerships.

In addition to financial contribution, Romania contributes with human resources and technical means, to the border control, as well as **search and rescue operations** in the Mediterranean Sea.

This set of measures is an integral part of our engagement, commitment and shared responsibility with countries and population most in need. We aim at concentrating our efforts on measures that include education, basic services, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, as well as political dialogue.

I will use the opportunity of my address at the Round Table 4 (*Global compact for responsibility-sharing for refugees; respect for international law*) to elaborate on Romania's contribution to the international response.

Thank you!