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General Debate

STATEMENT

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Mr. Chair,

Your Excellences,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to participate today at the general debate of the 51st session of the Commission on Population and Development, focusing on the special theme "Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration".

I congratulate Ambassador Ion Jinga, the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, chair of the 51st session of the Commission, and all the members of the Bureau for their election. Romania thanks the CPD Bureau for their continuous demarches to ensure an open and transparent process and I wish you all success in your deliberations.

The Commission on Population and Development, among other UN entities, is requested to have a contribution to the GCM, to the Integration Segment of the ECOSOC in June and to the High-Level Political Forum in July. Romania considers the Commission needs to send a positive signal for the reform of the United Nations Development System, initiated by the Secretary-General, by holding a successful session.

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.

Romania aligns itself with the declaration delivered by Austria on behalf of the 27 Member States of the European Union. I will continue now emphasizing some important elements regarding the special theme of this year in my national capacity.

Distinguished delegates,

A wide range of policies and programs witness Romania's commitment to the population and development agenda. The main measures implemented by the Government aim to rise the quality of life of all citizens, ensuring social cohesion, promotion of social inclusion and poverty reduction by assuring without discrimination the access of all, women and girls, man and boys to health, education, social protection including social services and social benefits.

We give a special attention to increase the participation of young people and other vulnerable groups on the labour market, to improve the quality of the labour force according to the market demands and also to improve the legislation, with the aim to encourage the job creation.

Romania understands the crucial role of families for the future development of the society, considering their contribution in providing care and education for the new generations, thus ensuring a smart and sustainable economic growth. Protecting families, especially in times of financial and economic crisis, represents one of the main concerns of the Government. The demographic pressure related to a global ageing society calls for coordinated measures and policies, at local, regional and central level. In order to ensure the long term sustainability of the pension system, a larger, younger and more competitive labour force is needed in the economy. Consequently, effective family oriented policies are the main drivers for future development and prosperity.

Metropolitan development is important for Romania's growth. An analysis of the World Bank shows that the eight largest metropolitan areas of Romania (Bucharest, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Craiova, Iasi, Ploiesti and Timisoara) provide 50% of the Romanian population and 75% of the country's fixed income. The economic growth and investment in dynamic urban areas have made more and more people commute or move, that requires integrated metropolitan transport solutions.

Public-private partnerships for running smart city projects are facilitated by accessing public and European funds, in many cases the budget being directly managed by the local authorities. Cities are also encouraged to cooperate with universities and other key actors in research and innovation to access these funds.

The largest cities in Romania have pilot projects pertaining to the Smart City solutions: SMS parking, smart lighting, Wi-Fi urban solutions, environmental sensors or video surveillance.

The Smart City project of Alba Iulia has the deadline for finalizing the ambitious and sophisticated project of the Centenary of the Great Union - 2018. Alba Iulia Smart City powered by a big mobile phone company is the most complex pilot project of a smart city developed in Romania, with 6 partner startups, mobile, fixed and dedicated connectivity to the Internet of Things area, over 600 sensors and two 5G technology R & D projects all set up so far.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In terms of human mobility and international migration, Romania continues to be essentially a country of emigration, the phenomenon of emigration being the second cause the country's population decline. The balance of international migration in 2016 was negative, the number of migrants exceeding the number of immigrants with over 76 thousand people. During 2016, men emigrated to a higher proportion than women (55.4%). And in the row immigrants, men were majority (53.6%).

Both labor migration from third countries to Romania and the internal professional mobility of citizens will play an important role, determining economic, financial, social, cultural and political effects.

Estimates say that over 2 million Romanians are working abroad (especially in EU member states in non-seasonal activities), which represents about 10% of Romania's population; the main destination countries for Romanian citizens are Spain and Italy and, to a lesser extent, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries.

Workers mobility is not just a phenomenon but must be a resource factor in designing social policies. We consider that the active employment measures implemented in Romania are linked to the realities of the labor market and take into account the changes in the structure of the national economy, as well as the regional and local developments in the labor market.

To this end, in order to respond to local disparities between supply and demand in the labor market, **a number of legislative changes have been adopted in recent years in order to allow and facilitate the mobility of people.** In this context, the mobility measures, such as relocation and installation bonuses are done to provide a diversified mix of policies for the disadvantaged groups. Overall, these measures are complementary, promoting internal mobility for all.

Referring to the protection of Romanian workers abroad, the Romanian authorities adopted and applied legal protection mechanisms focused on regulation of recruitment and placement on the labour market, through employment agents, respectively through temporary work agents; international social security agreements; strengthening of a body of labor and social attachés with attributions regarding the support and protection of the interests of Romanian workers abroad; there are currently attached to work and social affairs in Italy, Malta and San Marino, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ireland, Germany and Austria, Hungary, France, Greece and Cyprus, Finland, Estonia, Denmark and Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates.

Referring to the immigration process, ***The National Immigration Strategy for the period 2015-2018*** specifies that "Migration is a process that needs to be managed and not a problem that needs to be resolved."

Romania participates in the joint efforts of the Member States to reduce the pressure of illegal migration. On July 2, 2015, the Government of Romania approved the Memorandum on the Implementation of the Conclusions of the European Council on 25-26 June 2015 on the migration component. This document approved the acquisition by Romania of the share of 1,705 persons under the internal relocation mechanism and 80 persons under the EU extra-EU resettlement program, which clearly need international protection.

The National Immigration Strategy for the period 2015-2018 sets out as general strategic objectives:

I. Promoting legal migration for the benefit of all parties: Romanian society, immigrants and their countries of origin.

II. Strengthening the control of the legality of the stay of third-country nationals on the territory of Romania and the appropriate application of the removal measures and restrictive measures.

III. Improvement of the national asylum system in order to streamline and ensure compliance with applicable national, European and international legal standards.

At the same time, Romania, as an EU member states, participates actively in identifying of sustainable solutions for people in need, for the protection and social integration of third-country nationals.

Romania is open to provide expertise on access to sustainable solutions, including through exchange of information with participating States, the Working Group on Relocation and the Working Group on National Contact Points in the field of exchange of data and information on relocation and integration of refugees, the Working Group on relocation Issues organized under the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Interministerial Conference on Relocation, or expert meetings on relocation of beneficiaries of protection, organized by the European Commission.

Specific objectives of the Romanian Government for promoting legal migration are:

1.1. Facilitating the access to the territory of Romania of third-party citizens responding to the employment needs (creation of the legal framework for attracting and maintaining the labor force according to the identified needs)

1.2. Facilitating the access of third-country nationals to Romanian higher education institutions for identified areas and professions

1.3. Facilitate the admission and residence of third-country nationals for the development / development of business on Romanian territory in accordance with the national economic interest

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 51st session.

Thank you for your attention.