



**PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Preparatory Committee  
for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries  
Organizational session**

**STATEMENT  
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**New York, 8 February 2021**

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

At the outset of the preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, that will take place in January 2022, I would like to congratulate the Co-Chairs and the other members of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for their election and to wish them full success in their endeavor.

Romania align itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. I would like now to make few remarks in my national capacity.

The pandemic has reinforced the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of the Paris Agreement and of the Istanbul Program of Action for the LDCs. The 47 countries are among the most vulnerable members of the international community. They are home for 900 million people, half of which live below the poverty line.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown how deep inequalities make society as a whole more vulnerable, and offered important lessons for building resilience in an era of climate change. People most exposed to the coronavirus pandemic and to the resulting economic crisis are largely those who are also most vulnerable to climate change impacts, among them the lower-income and disadvantaged people, including women, elderly and informal workers.

The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, where we will agree a new Program of Action for the LDCs, is therefore expected to be a major milestone in the efforts of the LDCs and their partners to overcome these difficult times, including the COVID-19 crisis.

The Preparatory Committee needs to build on the results of the recent reviews conducted by the LDCs. The two upcoming regional review meetings that will take place in collaboration with the UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) are of utmost importance. We need to analyze the progress made over the last decade and identify the main issues preventing sustainable development.

The LDCs of Africa face multiple challenges, as they have fragile economies, low exports or exports of raw materials, they are often affected by conflicts, and the climate change has dramatic effects on them. Furthermore, three out of four LDCs are affected by fragility and instability, their development achievements being at risk by recurrent conflicts. This highlights the need for conflict prevention and conflict sensitivity to be included in programming the assistance.

Even though before the COVID-19 African LDCs had been making progress in the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action, the pandemic increased poverty rates,

inequality, political instability, the collapse of the tourism and the loss of jobs by the migrants from the LDCs, resulting in a severe cut of remittances.

The increase in debt burdens must also be effectively addressed. There is an urgent need for investments in digital connectivity and “decent work” that provides just remuneration, ensures basic rights at work, provides adequate social protection and the capacity to negotiate and develop work-related policies resulting from the pandemic.

These strains threaten the LDC’s efforts to achieve the SDGs and implement the Paris Agreement.

Therefore, we need to discuss how to strengthen the support provided to the LDCs by the international community, in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Before COVID-19 arrived, we have seen significant reduction in poverty that also led to the graduation of a number of LDCs, an important step towards the Istanbul program’s aim to graduate half of the members of the group. Financing the COVID-19 response and recovery in line with the SDGs must be the priority for the next years.

Romania has stepped up to help combat the impact of COVID-19 beyond its borders. In support of the *Team Europe financial package* and the *UN’s Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19*, more than 70% of the projects of the *National Annual Plan 2020 for international cooperation for development and humanitarian assistance* have been redirected in order to respond to the more urgent needs due to the pandemic.

In order to respond to the calls launched by EU, UN and OECD, Romania paid special attention to assisting most vulnerable countries from Africa and SIDS, but also in our neighborhood.

My country allocated 54% of its *Annual Plan* to the LDC in 2020, and 10% to the SIDS. The first five partner countries for the development activities last year were the Democratic Republic of Congo (representing 18% of the total Annual Plan), the United Republic of Tanzania (representing 10%), Zambia (representing 10%), the Republic of Moldova (representing more than 10%) and Ukraine (representing 6%).

Other partner countries for development were Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Malawi, Uganda, Tuvalu, and Haiti. Romania also made voluntary contributions to the African Union and the Pacific Islands Forum. The projects that we co-financed were mainly focused on sustainable economic development, governance and inclusive societies and education, aiming to generate sustainable investment, green jobs and protect livelihoods.

Finally Mr. Chair, I would like to reaffirm Romania’s support for the LDCs recovering better and greener from the impact of COVID-19 and towards reaching the SDGs. I wish you the best of success in the preparations of the fifth UN Conference for the LDCs!

Thank you for your attention.

