

*Permanent Mission of Romania  
to the United Nations  
New York*



*Mission permanente de la Roumanie  
auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies  
New York*

Check against delivery

## **A D D R E S S**

by

**H.E. Mr. Mihai-Razvan UNGUREANU,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania,**

**at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the UN General Assembly**

*New York, September 22nd, 2006*

Madame President,

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you in your position as President of the General Assembly. The Romanian delegation looks forward to a presidency which brings to the World Organization excellent diplomatic skills, while increasing trust in the prospect of a more balanced gender representation at the top. I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Jan Eliasson, the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly for his outstanding performance and commitment to the reform of the United Nations.

*The European Union*

2. Romania subscribed to the statement made by the President of Finland, on behalf of the European Union, and fully shares the views expressed therein. I only wish, therefore, to bring in my address a frank testimony of the keen and active interest my country is taking in a strong and effective United Nations.

*Definition of the relation of Romania with the United Nations*

Madame President,

3. The Secretary General recently stated, and I quote: "*Our success in advancing the agenda will depend in great part on forging coalitions for change involving government representatives, civil society, the private sector, philanthropic foundations, academic institutions and all others with contributions to make. I know that **Romania is strongly committed to this path of partnership**, and has been working actively to cement constructive ties with the United Nations and with its neighbours throughout Europe as the country moves towards formal accession to the European Union*". I could not have put it better, if I wished to characterize in a nutshell our genuine commitment to effective multilateralism, and to a better management of the rapid and multifaceted changes brought along by globalisation.

*Today's Romania is herself a result of reform process*

4. In all modesty, Madame President, **we strive hard to do what we preach**. In 16 years, Romania had to **compress time and history** and make up for decades of ideological pandemics, economic mismanagement, disrespect for human rights and lack of democracy. I would like to express the gratitude of my government for the constant support the UN has extended during our transition in many helpful ways, including the valuable work of its country team in Romania. We have come a long way to be in a position to join the European Union, which is profoundly rooted in the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. We have worked hard, that is true, and we had great friends all the way down to help us prevail; I am proud to say that the UN has been and still is foremost among these friends.

We could not have made it that without engaging daily, and often painfully, in a constant effort to reform institutions and mentalities in our society.

5. This is why, Madame President, Romania understands and wishes to be an **active participant in the current reform process** pursuant to the guidelines we accepted in the Millennium Summit Outcome.

*The Human Rights Council*

6. We have made significant steps ahead as far as the institutional reform is concerned. We agreed to change the Human Right Commission, a body whose historical mission was accomplished. We created a new Human Rights Council to help the United Nations make a fresh start in the implementation of the impressive corpus of international human rights instruments built since the Universal Declaration. But let us not indulge into complacency! If we do not fill the new box with the expected contents, our intention to reform will remain an **unfinished journey**.

7. The Human Rights Council should spare no effort in order to do what it is meant to do: uphold, into the daily work of governments across all continents and legal systems, **the priority given to making sure that human rights are widely and deeply known and observed**. We should not see the primary duty of the international community to

monitor the implementation of human rights law, be it by a universal peer review or by the expert work of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, as unfriendly gestures towards our governments. We should see them as a genuine contribution to the improvement of the lives of the people on behalf of whom we are governing.

#### *Romania in the Human Rights Council*

8. Romania **placed very high in its Constitution the obligation to respect human rights** and opened up to its the doors to the European mechanisms and the UN special procedures. We are honoured by the exceptional opportunity we have, as members of the first Human Rights Council, to contribute to the reform of the UN human rights machinery. We have already come up with some proposals aimed at streamlining the work of the new Council and upholding its authority. We need to work more to genuinely making human rights a fundamental pillar of the United Nations, on equal footing with security and development, by will of its Charter.

#### *The Peacebuilding Commission*

9. A similar need goes for the Peacebuilding Commission. The history of the United Nations may be seen through the constant trend of creating new bodies to address new problems. This can be a virtue, if these bodies have a strong mandate and sufficient resources to meet the expectations. But it can also be a sin, if we only generate more meetings and documents without consequence. The Peacebuilding Commission is a **remarkable institutional and legal innovation**. Let us also fill up this frame with new thinking and resources, rather than old habits. Its fundamental function is to create a continuum between the end of the conflict and the beginning of economic and institutional reconstruction and provide strategy, resources and political will, so as to ensure that peace will last.

#### *The Security Council*

10. Considerable efforts have been deployed, since 1993, for the reform of the Security Council. Romania is ready to embark upon a meaningful and pragmatic consideration of the increase in the membership of the Security Council, while preserving its effectiveness and credibility. We are aware of the inherent difficulties of a further

enlargement. Recent debates have shown that all member States should benefit, to a certain extent, from the reform of the most powerful body in the United Nations system. An obvious case in point is the **Eastern European group which expects a fair share** in the eventual outcome of negotiations on this matter.

#### *The revitalization of the General Assembly*

11. The issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly is also on our agenda. The intense quest for expanding the Security Council should not obscure the need to genuinely reform the most representative organ of the United Nations, its General Assembly. There are many ways to do much more within existing resources of time and money. We can make simple reforms. We may choose to streamline the agenda, by confining it to essential and topical issues, avoiding the annual repetition of texts which bring no true added value, and using **less rhetoric and more pragmatism** as the main thread of our decisions. The General Assembly should not produce tones of resolutions that can hardly be digested, but focus on a limited number of **guidelines for action reflecting feasible goals**.

#### *Promoting democracy*

12. The General Assembly can also do more in its role of **supporter of democratization processes in various countries**. We know how shy the drafters of the Charter were about the use of the notion of democracy. During the Cold War the „D” word was taboo at the United Nations. Times have changed for the better. I genuinely believe that the United Nations has made considerable, if not truly spectacular, progress in this area.

#### *Actions initiated by Romania*

13. My country is **proud to have been an active player** in two international movements whose fundamental task was to promote democracy: the New and Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies. We took dedicated action under both auspices. Romania initiated a series of five resolutions on different aspects of democracy-building that have been adopted since 2000, by both the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. We organized cross-regional and regional

meetings; we initiated expert missions in the field to help consolidate the emerging democratic institutions in several democratic countries.

#### *Romanian proposals*

14. There is no reason why the United Nations would slow down this process. On the contrary. We take this opportunity to encourage both the sixth International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies to be held in Qatar, and the third Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, to be held in Mali, to dare more. **Time has come for us to adopt a Universal Declaration on Democracy, a Code of Democratic Conduct or even an international Covenant on the right to democracy.** Democracy works despite difficulties and temporary setbacks. Again, if we have doubts about our duty, we should ask our people: do they want to have a choice in a multiparty system and to make full use of fair elections, instead of not participating or having to accede violently to power? Do they want to be governed by dictators who work for themselves or by governments who work for the governed? You may find the answer to these queries quite obvious.

#### *Constitutional reform*

15. In our deliberations about reform one of the questions was how to undertake the constitutional reform and bring the Charter more in line with the new challenges of our time. There is much to be done here in spite of our understandable reluctance to re-open the sacred book. At the same time, we could **more adequately make most out of the existing legal framework.**

#### *The UN and regional organisations*

16. We believe that Chapter VIII of the Charter is a generous framework for increased and more efficient cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations. During her tenure as non-permanent member of the Security Council, Romania initiated a rewarding debate on this topic, which led to the adoption of the **resolution 1631 (2005)**. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "*A regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities*". The report is a very valuable contribution to the clarification of the possible distribution of roles based on the

competitive advantages of regional organizations. It suggests avenues to be further explored in order to **define and refine the action pack contained in Chapter VIII**. We support the recommendations made by the Secretary-General that aim at passing from *ad-hoc-racy* to the gradual institutionalization of the operational mechanisms of an enhanced cooperation.

#### *Romania and regional cooperation*

17. In this field too, Romania **practices what she preaches**. The proof lies in her determination to pursue the **regional cooperation processes** in Central and South-eastern Europe, in various fields: the Process of Cooperation of the South-Eastern European States, the Central European Initiative, the Danubian Cooperation Process, the Stability Pact in South-eastern Europe, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and many others. The stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region stands as a main priority of our foreign policy at regional level. We are pursuing a new cooperation paradigm expected to produce deliverable results. Romania is satisfied for having promoted, during her mandate as Chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, two important initiatives: a Black-Sea Euro-region, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, and a Forum for Dialogue and Partnership.

#### *Romania as an emerging donor*

18. Romania is a conscientious and responsible member of the international community and ready to assume her duties. The constant and robust economic growth over the last years allows Romania to consider now acting as donor, **helping the developing countries in their longstanding pursuit of economic prosperity**. Hopefully our national experience of a difficult, but eventually successful, economic reform, will be credibly shared with our friends. My government has already taken measures that defining the legal framework for financing the **official assistance for development**. It has decided upon a schedule meant to lead to the allocation of 0,33 % of the GDP in 2015 to that effect.

#### *Frozen conflicts*

19. Europe has peace at its borders. But this is half-true if we take into consideration the continued existence of frozen conflicts that seem to escape the active attention of the United Nations. We ought to state that **turning a deaf ear to the unresolved conflicts whose roots are to be found back in the Soviet era is a failure to our duty**. Conflicts affect small states that are trying hard to consolidate their independence, institutions, and economies. They need the help of the United Nations and protection under international law.

#### *Transnistria*

20. One of the most striking examples is the situation in Transnistria, a separatist area in our neighbouring country, the Republic of Moldova. We can not have forever a **lawless regime** there, a regime backed by heavily armed troops, involved in smuggling and illegal trafficking, and disrespectful of human rights. A regime that is ready to occupy, *manu militari*, schools, to blackmail its neighbours and the legitimate government of the Republic of Moldova with its arms and ammunitions, and to cynically mock democracy by summoning unlawful referenda. The United Nations must use the means of its Charter **to put an end to the dark ages** in Transnistria. We need the genuine will of all relevant actors to do so, be they international organizations or neighbouring countries. In the same vein, we believe that it is our duty to help the courageous efforts of Georgia to build a democratic society and to re-gain full territorial integrity.

There is hope. The recent adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on protracted conflicts, which Romania fully supported, augurs well for a new attitude.

#### *Kosovo*

21. Seven years after the United Nations took responsibility in the future of this province, Kosovo is the symbol of the difficult legacy the Western Balkans is struggling to overcome. Romania supports the efforts of the UN Status Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and of the Contact Group. Both sides directly concerned should extend greater flexibility to achieve a lasting and mutually accepted solution. The UN role remains extremely important until the future status of the province is decided.

*Romania – a genuine partner at global level*



*UN peacekeeping*

22. Our interest for peace, stability and prosperity is not confined to our own region. Romania tries hard to make significant **contributions to the maintenance of peace all over the world**. Our military, police and civilian personnel is present in the nine United Nations peacekeeping operations deployed in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Kosovo, Haiti, and Sudan. Together with other peace-loving nations, we contribute troops to other major peace operations such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia. Currently almost 2000 Romanian troops, civilian police, military observers, staff officers, support personnel are engaged in those areas, while 700 are in stand-by, including for SHIRBRIG.

*Contributions to peace operations at global level*

23. At the same time, we believe that more endeavours are necessary to find lasting political solutions to the existing conflicts or tensions. Afghanistan has made a long way towards becoming a stable state, free of the terrorist and Taliban plight. However, many challenges lie ahead. Winning the peace in Afghanistan requires even more enhanced and coordinated effort by the international community, especially in fighting insurgents, training Afghan army and police and speeding up quick - impact reconstruction projects.

24. Romania firmly supports the Government of Iraq with a view to creating an efficient and responsible administration. Strong international support is needed for the Iraqi people to succeed in finding lasting stability and go back to work for its prosperity. Technical and financial support is also badly needed. It is essential not to weaken the international presence in Iraq, without which the progress made thus far will be put at risk.

25. Romania takes note with satisfaction of the latest developments in Lebanon and in particular of the progress made in the deployment of an expanded United Nations force in the area. We believe that we are witnessing a historical breakthrough into a longstanding conflict and we are confident that the full implementation of the resolution 1701 (2006) and of the future mandate of UNIFIL will fuel hope and trust for a political lasting solution of the Middle East conflict. In Stockholm, my government pledged

500.000 Euro for humanitarian assistance to Lebanon, the most important amount ever allocated to such a process by Romania.

*Non-proliferation and the fight against terrorism*

26. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction has emerged as a major threat to global security and international stability. We should never underestimate any possible prospects that those weapons are used in terrorist activities. We stand for new international efforts aimed at strengthening the existing international regimes, ensuring full and unconditional implementation of obligations undertaken by the States Parties and promoting the universalisation of multilateral treaties and agreements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

27. At the same time, we have to continue to fight terrorism, individually and collectively, so as to eliminate it as a threat to the life of innocent people and to the daily operation of our societies. To succeed, the international community has to identify correctly and overcome the factors that favour terrorism. Romania has engaged firmly in the fight against terrorist threats, both by participating in the efforts of the international community as well as those undertaken at regional and sub-regional organizations.

Madame La Présidente,

*Sommet de la Francophonie*

28. Il revient à la Roumanie le privilège d'accueillir prochainement, le onzième Sommet de la Francophonie. La Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement ayant le français en partage aura lieu le 28 et le 29 septembre 2006, à Bucarest. La Francophonie va décidément au delà de sa spécificité qui tient de la promotion du multilinguisme. Au sommet précédent, la Francophonie a agi en **partenaire fidèle** en adoptant un cadre stratégique plié aux objectifs du Millénaire et à ceux du plan d'action du Sommet onusien de Johannesburg. Ce cadre s'insère pleinement dans le contexte de la lutte contre la pauvreté et pour le développement durable. Il s'appuie sur

un consensus qui met l'accent sur les droits de l'homme, la bonne gouvernance et la démocratie ainsi que sur la prévention des conflits et l'établissement de la paix. Cette année le Sommet propose comme thème « *Les technologies de l'information dans l'éducation* ». C'est une autre complémentarité que la Francophonie entend cultiver pour contribuer aux objectifs décidés au Sommet mondial sur la société de l'information. J'espère que pendant la session de l'Assemblée générale que nous avons ouverte, la Roumanie pourra rapporter de nouvelles actions de la Francophonie en harmonie avec les objectifs des Nations Unies.

Je vous remercie, Madame la Présidente,