

DECLARATION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA on the Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. This ambitious programme built on the experience and results achieved in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) provides a new action framework for the eradication of poverty and inequalities worldwide by promoting an inclusive and equitable development, grounded in respect for human rights.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as integral part of the Agenda, will serve as keystones for international cooperation and endeavors of States around the world with a view to fostering inclusive economic growth and progress in all spheres of the social life, preventing and countering climate change and protecting the environment during the next 15 years.

The Parliament of Romania endorses the importance of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental -, and the need to address them comprehensively, in close connection with measures to improve the institutional fabric and capacities at both national and international levels. We also underscore that peace and security, democracy and the rule of law, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, the empowerment of women, the engagement of young generations and, last but not least, good governance are essential requirements for an irreversible evolution towards sustainable development.

Moreover, implementing the re-visited concept of sustainable development is intrinsically linked to the dissemination of information, behaviors and attitudes that are conducive to a society based on knowledge and innovation, and therefore, to a better quality of life. Thus, education in its widest sense becomes an indispensable factor and a genuine driving force for achieving the SDGs in their entirety.

By virtue of its essentially representative nature and its constitutional lawmaking, oversight and budgeting functions, the Parliament of Romania has a decisive role in ensuring national ownership of the SDGs, translating them into country-specific strategic priorities, objectives and targets, and in creating the necessary conditions for them to be met.

We fully assume this responsibility and will continue to adapt our structures and working procedures so as to ensure a coherent and unitary approach of the SDGs throughout the entire parliamentary activity, while facilitating the continuity of parliamentary action from one legislative term to another.

In the same vein, we believe that Romania's sustainable development objectives need to be embedded in a programmatic document having the strength to galvanize the will and efforts of all political forces in the long term, irrespective of doctrines and future parliamentary majorities.

While aware that sustainable development is not an aim in itself, but the only way towards achieving human rights, human development and prosperity for all, we will see to it that Parliament plays from the outset an active role in the elaboration of Romania's new strategic framework for sustainable development, and that this framework is adopted by law, in Parliament.

Setting up the priorities and major intervention areas with due consideration to national strategies and action plans already in place, establishing the components of the future strategic framework and their implementation by 2030 are very complex and wide-ranging tasks, which require, in our view, an inter-sector coordination at the highest level, performed by a body placed under the direct authority of the Prime Minister of the Government of Romania.

The Parliament will give priority to the revision and updating of national laws, so as to ensure that legislation supports Romania's sustainable development objectives in a coherent and integrated manner. Within our parliamentary oversight activities, we will ask the Government to inform us regularly on progress in the implementation of the relevant national policies. We will also see to it that the national reports prepared by the Government in the framework of the reviews performed globally by the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development are submitted beforehand to Parliament, for consideration and debate.

The financing of sustainable development will have to be a major benchmark in the allocation of budgetary resources. To the same end, we will envisage fiscal stimulus measures to encourage sustainable production and consumption patterns, increase investments in key economic sectors, improve the economic environment, facilitate the public-private partnerships.

A modern and efficient National Statistical System and the development of quality statistical products and services are major prerequisites for a solid foundation of the national sustainable development policies, as well as for their monitoring and accurate evaluation. The Parliament will support the financial and legislative measures needed to implement the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System and of Romania's Official Statistics (2015-2020), and will ensure that the Data Basis on Sustainable Development in Romania provides reliable terms of reference to assess progress towards the national sustainable development objectives, and adopt corrective measures, where necessary.

Fully aware that Romania's success in driving sustainable development forward is only possible in so far as the objectives proposed effectively address the expectations and needs of the people, and the decisions taken for their implementation result in an increase of the quality of life and individual and collective wellbeing, we will give priority to engaging citizens in parliamentary activities and processes related to sustainable development by facilitating their access to information, consultation and participation.

At the same time, we will stimulate public debate over Romania's sustainable development, while taking the necessary steps for an enhanced coordination of parliamentary action with that of national institutions, local authorities, civil society organisations, academia, private sector, and other major national and international stakeholders.

The national policy of cooperation for development represents for Romania, as EU Member State and Official Development Assistance donor, the main instrument in fulfilling the external commitments on sustainable development. The Romanian Parliament supports the updating of the legal and institutional framework, of national strategies and programs in this area, as well as the identification of innovative financial mechanisms, so as to ensure that our country meets its international obligations promptly, efficiently and fully in line with the new SDGs.

We commend the Inter-Parliamentary Union for its significant contribution in upholding, strengthening and securing international recognition of the crucial role of parliaments in achieving the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The Parliament of Romania renews its commitment to advance the goals of this prestigious organization that we have been a part of for the last 125 years, and pledges to further mobilize its expertise and resources with the aim of acting as regional hub of the IPU in fostering good governance and sustainable development in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the same spirit, while sharing the conviction that parliamentary diplomacy provides a generous space and multiple opportunities for maximizing parliamentary engagement with the SDGs, we will ensure that sustainable development is put at the forefront of the agenda of activities to which the Parliament of Romania takes part, in the field of bilateral, regional and multilateral inter-parliamentary cooperation.