



Voluntary National Review - ROMANIA

18 July 2018

- 1. Intervention of H.E. Mrs. Gratiela Leocadia Gavrilescu, Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Environment of Romania**
- 2. Intervention of Mrs. Luminita Ghita, VNR Coordinator, Head of Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Environment**
- 3. Intervention of Mr. Laszlo Borbely, Coordinator of the Departement for Sustainable Development, General Secretariat of the Government**
- 4. Intervention of Monica Prisacariu, FOND Board Member (FOND - Federation of Romanian Non-governmental Organizations for Development)**



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



1. Gratiela Leocadia GAVRILESCU

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

As seen in this short film, Romania made good progress towards a sustainable and resilient society. I am very proud to present here, our first National Voluntary Review. The process of VNR guided our national entities dealing with sustainable development to work better, creates workflows on setting actions and public policies orientated to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs.

We are fully engaged to continue the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda, at national level, and also to contribute on its implementation globally. We need to work on synergies between diverse policy tools and to develop public policies to accomplish the targets of SDGs.

For Romania, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a process of transformation towards a sustainable and modern society. On breaking the silo approach and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the ownership of SDGs is not dealing just with one person or organization, but it approaches various sectors.

All ministries and institutions, all civil servants from central and local governments, decision makers, and members of Parliaments should be part of the implementation process.

We need to strengthen dialogue and cooperation at local and regional level, in order to create platforms and partnerships with all stakeholders who are interested in this process. These transformations will improve our economy, our environment and our society not only for the present generations, but also for the future ones. A sustainable society can be reached by cultivating a sense of belonging and community that ensures social inclusion and loyalty to nature.





Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three years after the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Romania's National Voluntary Report is a proper way to assess the impact of our actions towards sustainable development, as well as to establish the projection of our actions for the future.

The Report underlines the SDGs under review at the 2018 High-level Political Forum, but also includes elements of other goals.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implies poverty eradication based on the *leave no one behind* promise and determines the first chapter of our report, entitled "Leave No One Behind". This presents the Romanian policies and trends in developing an inclusive and sustainable society focused on the social aspects of sustainable development.

For Romania, strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development is essential!

In order to strengthen environmental governance, in my capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Environment, I led *The Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of the Integration of Environmental Protection into Sectoral Policies and Strategies at the National Level*, representing the main decision-making body for sustainable development in Romania.

I am also a Member of Parliament and I consider the engagement of National Parliaments of utmost importance for the implementation of 2030 Agenda, especially on setting the legislative framework.

In 2015, the Parliament of Romania decided to create a Sub-Committee for Sustainable Development and in April 2016, adopted a Declaration (of the Parliament) on Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

One of the main provisions of the declaration states the creation of a unit under the direct authority of the Prime-Minister, dedicated to the implementation of 2030 Agenda.

In April 2017, by a Government Decision was created the Department for Sustainable Development, having as main responsibility the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level.

The Department for Sustainable Development is led by a State Counsellor and he will present, later, the process of the reviewing of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.





We, and our teams, are working close, ensuring the coordination and reviewing the process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level.

After this introduction, I will invite my colleague, who coordinated the drafting of this Review, to present the process of Romania's Voluntary National Review (VNR) and its outcomes.





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2. LUMINITA GHITA

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear colleagues,

We are presenting for the first time our Voluntary National Review.

VNR represents an enabler for succeeding in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for paving the way for the implementation of 2030 Agenda at national level. The six SDGs reviewed at HLPF this year, are the engine that tackles the transformation to sustainable societies.

Working on breaking the silo approach, such a complex and interlinked agenda requires the use of existing expertise at national level, gather the initiatives and define an ownership of the 2030 Agenda in which a larger community should be involved.

Being part of the same process, drafting our Voluntary National Review and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, started in the same time, in September 2017, when the Inter-ministerial Committee, dealing with Sustainable Development at national level, decided to conduct the VNR under the coordination of the Secretariat of the Committee, and to review the National Sustainable Development Strategy (aiming to localize the SDGs) under the coordination of the new structure established at the level of the Secretariat General of the Government - the Department for Sustainable Development.

On drafting the VNR, we have continued the work of stocktaking the different information (plans, actions, strategies) from various institutions at national and sub-national level, in order to localize the 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets. The process of stocktaking dates back from March 2016 (after 3 months of entering into force of the 2030 Agenda) and all the ministries, institutions, universities and civil society representatives were invited and have contributed to the process. It was established an *Open Working Group*, analyzing the information and begin drafting the document. In May 2018 we presented the VNR





with the title “Transformation towards a sustainable and resilient Romania” inspiring from the actual theme of HLPF.

This VNR analyses in detail the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) revised during the 2018 Session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, focusing on (SDG6, SDG7, SDG11, SDG12, SDG15 and SDG17) the six SDGs reviewed this year. The first substantive chapter entitled “Leave no one behind” presents Romanian policies and trends on developing an inclusive and sustainable society focusing on social aspects of sustainable development.

As a short summary, Romania achieved the greatest economic growth in the European Union, 6,9% in 2017, and also managed to achieve the 25% of energy from renewable source, achieved since 2014, target initially assigned for 2020. This shows our commitment and belief in Sustainable Development.

Our unique and rich biodiversity calls all of us to forge a regional partnership in order to maintain the ecosystems services and genetic diversity required for a healthy environment and healthy population. Romania dedicated effort to preserve ecosystems and tackle air pollution by lowering the emission coming from energy intensive industries, air pollution that otherwise would impact biodiversity. To make a point, Danube Delta requires a clean Danube river, consequently all the nations that have tributaries to Danube river need to come together and tackle the problematic of the impact on the environment.

Romania plays an important role regarding the export of democracy in the region, as such we offered experience to our neighbors (*Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine*), promoting this way a strong community in this part of Europe, for a stable Europe. A stable geopolitical situation is required in order to preserve nature, grow and assure human rights.

Our culture, along with our neighbor’s cultures, and the ecosystem diversity represents the important base for a sustainable development. Diversity is the key for the resilience of the entire humanity, in the limits of our planet.

Reviewing the National Strategy (for Sustainable Development), taking onboard the SDGs, requires to establish an effective implementation and review mechanism, to integrate the present workflow across different ministries and institutions, thus improving inter-departmental cooperation and creating a favourable environment.





Romania's first "National Sustainable Development Strategy" dates back from 1999 (by motto: "Doing more with less") and, after achieving European Union membership, in 2007, the Strategy was revised - based on 2 years reviewing process, and updated in 2008. The adopted document (approved by the Romanian Government Decision No. 1460 on 12 November 2008, Official Gazette No. 824/ 8 December 2008) "National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania. Horizons 2013-2020-2030" (by motto: "Keep healthy what keeps you in good health") was a result of a joint project of the Romanian Government through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme.

Institutional framework for sustainable development in Romania comprises (was strengthened):

1. *The Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of the Integration of Environmental Protection into Sectoral Policies and Strategies at the National Level*, representing the main decision-making body for sustainable development in Romania.
2. The Subcommission for Sustainable Development - in the Parliament of Romania
3. The Department for Sustainable Development - under the Secretariat General of the Government, with main responsibility on the implementation of 2030 Agenda at national level.

Following my presentation, please allow me to give the floor to the Coordinator of the Department for Sustainable Development (Secretariat General of the Government) – Mr Laszlo Borbely.





3. LASZLO BORBELY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2015 was a milestone for humanity. It has been three years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. All these agreements have provided the world and Romania with a vision, horizon and a framework through which we can achieve the promises of a better and more sustainable tomorrow.

Our biggest challenge today is to live sustainable and to make sure that nobody is left behind. If we are to analyse this statement, one must ask: what are we doing to achieve this? The sustainable future we desire begins with each one of us. Are we living a sustainable life? I'm asking because we should. Sustainable development is not a *fancy buzz word* or something we should keep postponing. It's a spirit and a way of life for the nurture of future generations.

Romania has a unique (strategic) biogeographical position. It is an European Union member state at the crossroads between Central Europe, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe. Romania, being a bridge between ecological regions, cultures, energy routes and innovations, has the ambition to become a regional hub for sustainable development.

Such an ambitious goal requires hard work. Romania has had a Sustainable Development Strategy dating from 2008. However, with the 2030 Agenda, we have considered it essential to revise it. We have finished our first draft, and we are expecting to launch this document this upcoming September.

We are about to create the required context for Sustainable Policy so that we can lay the foundations for this purpose.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To bridge the gap between politics and civil society, we are starting a movement to create the momentum for sustainable development through education dedicated to the principles of Sustainable Development along with *common sense* and through partnerships, formed through stakeholder leadership (public-private partnership), in order to achieve this sustainable future.





In 2016, The Parliament of Romania established a sub-committee for Sustainable Development. The parliamentary dimension is essential. We need informed members of parliament who understand the principles of Sustainable Development and include them in their debates and legislation initiatives. Therefore, we translated two handbooks to use when analysing legislative drafts.

In May of 2017, the Government of Romania established a Department of Sustainable Development at the Prime Minister's Office. This Department, which I am heading, seeks to coordinate, monitor, and help in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The first step the Department has taken in implementing the 2030 Agenda is revising Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy which will be launched this September. However, this is only the beginning. It is our goal to reach the 'critical mass' needed to transform the 2030 Agenda into reality. We are creating a network with more than 1000 dedicated individuals, from areas ranging from academia, NGOs, public institutions, and business leaders.

Partnerships are essential, and such leadership requires experts. Sustainable Development experts, a new profession in Romania recognised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, will help us achieve the dream of a more sustainable tomorrow. There will be a team of experts in every public institution tasked with guiding public policy towards a Sustainable tomorrow.

We will create both an Interdepartmental Committee headed by the Prime Minister, and a Consultative Council formed by experts from academia, civil society, and the private sector who can report to the parliament their opinion. However, we suggest that the civil society creates a coalition of different stakeholders to help us in our pursuit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are presenting Romania's Voluntary National Review. Strengthening our past actions, we will build the institutional framework for sustainable development, and afterwards, we will update the national set of sustainable development indicators to measure our progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda has a holistic character, which means that we would put together our energy and expertise for a better tomorrow. We need everybody on board, all member states of the UN and all societal actors.





It is only afterwards that we will be able to reunite in 2030 and, after an accomplished mission, congratulate ourselves that yes, in these critical decades, we have managed to work together and create a better world for future generations.

4. MONICA PREISACARIU – NGOs representative

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for FOND, the Romanian Platform of development NGOs, to be present at the High-level Political Forum as part of the Romanian Delegation. Equally, we are glad to be able to contribute to the Voluntary National Review.

Being here, at the same table with our colleagues from public institutions, reflects the power of the SDGs to bring together those actors from different institutions, organizations and sectors that share the goal of achieving sustainable development.

FOND unites under its umbrella some of the most active Romanian CSOs working in development and actively contributing to all 17 SDGs, not only in Romania, but also in the Black Sea Region and internationally.

As CSOs, we play a crucial role at the grassroots level by directly implementing the SDGs, by raising awareness among citizens, and by facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue. We support exchanges of best practices and lessons learnt, generating research and evidence, and holding Governments accountable to their commitments.

As an example, we would like to highlight our 10-year successful collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the context of development cooperation. We have managed to develop together a well-known initiative called the Romanian Development Camp, a space where we have debated on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals and raised awareness on the implementation of Agenda 2030. The Black Sea NGO Forum is another initiative which brings together, every year, many CSOs from the region and generates regional initiatives and networks.

For us, SDG 17 is crucial for the implementation of Agenda 2030. In particular we would like to stress the importance of target 17.14 “Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development” and that we





need more practical examples of how to improve monitoring and coordination at national level on supporting more coherence between different policies and actors. At the same time, we should not take for granted target 17.17 “Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships”, and all of us here should strive for fostering an enabling environment conducive to such multi-stakeholder partnerships.

In Romania’s VNR, the CSOs input has highlighted their essential role in ensuring that no one is left behind in the implementation of Agenda 2030, by providing a voice for those most vulnerable and affected by the global challenges targeted by the SDGs (especially the youth).

CSOs play a fundamental role in implementing Agenda 2030. Long decades of experience in working at the grassroots level to produce development results led to advancements on all of the 17 SDGs. In the current context, we would like to call for international attention and support to resist the closing space for civil society around the world. Civil Society represents people that governments should protect and defend, not oppress – unfortunately, a trend that we increasingly see as limiting both fundamental freedoms and the chances to successful implementation of the SDGs.

More than ever, we need empowering leadership that recognizes that only by working together in partnership, by respecting fundamental rights, by addressing common challenges, and by sharing the burden, we will be able to reach our ambitious agenda and fulfill the responsibility we have towards future generations.

