



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
WATERS AND FORESTS

CABINET OF THE MINISTER

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2021

Hybrid Session “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

STATEMENT

by

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Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear Colleagues,

In a very short period of time, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the course of our lives, causing tragic loss of lives and an unprecedented global crisis in our society with long-term effects.

COVID-19 is a confirmation of how destructive we have been with nature, affecting its every dimension. Environmental degradation, climate change effects, biodiversity loss and growing inequalities have highlighted our vulnerabilities, and shown us that our actions must be determined and imperative.

The crisis we are facing today has shown that a fundamental paradigm shift is needed in the way that we are think and act. In my opinion, it should be clear by now that these aspects are required to be drawn in the direction of strengthening a better collaboration between countries and generations towards a common goal: building back better based on the 2030 Agenda's principle – *live no one behind*.

As an EU Member State, Romania considers that providing a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic and stepping up our efforts for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will provide the universal framework for a sustainable and inclusive recovery, during this crucial Decade of Action. These are our top priorities; we are currently focusing on.

It is important to send a global message that the environmental situation is still precarious and, that it is therefore imperative to provide a supportive response to ensure post-pandemic sustainability.

Romania is actively involved in strengthening the global environmental governance, in the interest of stepping up the efforts to improve the environment's status on national, regional and global level. It goes without saying that this course of action envisages a strong support for the UN Environment Assembly and UN's Environmental Program regarding the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In this regard, UNEP plays a leading role in shaping the global environmental agenda and the UN Environment Assembly remains the main instrument in providing guidance to promote the integration of the environmental dimension of the

SDGs. Therefore, Romania welcomes the outcomes of the online segment of the Fifth session of the UNEA Program which provides important tools to address the global environmental crisis.

In this regard, **Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030** defines the national framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a roadmap for achieving the SDGs.

In addition, we are currently developing a strategy for the transition to a circular economy and consider that this instrument can play a decisive role in addressing the climate and environmental crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing in the same time to Romania's economy growth and preserving its natural resources.

Also, at governmental level we are working continuously to finalize **the National Recovery and Resilience Plan**. We have drafted it around six pillars, namely: green transition, digital transformation, smart growth, social and territorial cohesion, health and resilience, and policies addressing the next generation. The Plan includes measures for sustainable transport, education, healthcare, building renovation and for the public administration's digitalization.

Regarding the forestry sector, Romania recently implemented a new integrated information system for tracking wood material, called **SUMAL 2.0**. This application improves timber traceability and discourages illegal logging.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have to admit that we are in a race against time to adapt to a changing climate at global level, and therefore the adaptation is an extremely important component of climate action.

Romania is convinced that adaptation to climate change has to be promoted as a solution for managing climate impact and protecting the population, especially in the most vulnerable areas.

As an EU Member State, Romania attaches increasing importance to climate change, **in line with the new ambitious climate targets of the European Union**.

In this regard, our priorities include solving the problems concerning the vulnerability of agriculture, improving water management and strengthening the role of disaster risk reduction policies by addressing nature-based solutions.

Romania included in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan reforms regarding the management of water resources, improving meteorological and agrometeorological measurements and information at territorial level in order to increase the accuracy of weather alerts and warnings.

Thus, we will expand the national observation network with new automatic meteorological stations with agrometeorological programs.

In the same time, we will continue to improve the availability and quality of climate and health data and harmonize them with international initiatives and instruments, in order to support the development of multiple indices of health and climate vulnerability.

On the other hand, Romania is developing through the Environment Fund Administration several programs addressing various areas, such as: reducing greenhouse gas emissions in transport and providing green public transport grants for the purchase of a new, environmentally friendly public transport vehicles. Also, we are conducting programs addressing the increase of energy efficiency and intelligent energy management in public buildings for schools.

To sum up, Romania's recovery and resilience packages will support and invest with responsibility in integrated approaches to deal with the challenges generated both by climate change and biodiversity loss. All these actions are being oriented towards achieving a sustainable and equitable society for present and future generations.

In this given context, it is my strong belief that the voices of environmental leaders are needed more than ever.

Our role in the political decision-making process during these exceptional times is crucial!

Thank you!