

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

We have come together here, at the 2022 session of the UNECE Regional Forum, to address the sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis, which was, without doubt, a setback for major aspects of life, and certainly one for sustainable development. Faced with such a shift in paradigm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have come to the reckoning that adaptability and resilience must be key in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in our region and building back better.

Agenda 2030 is a comprehensive and ambitious set of actions, but we cannot really establish its degree of success without a thorough evaluation. In Romania, the **Department of Sustainable Development** has created an innovative mechanism that monitors nationally the sustainable development indicators. This instrument has the means to cross examine and collect data in regards to all SDGs and their degree of implementation. Moreover, it offers institutions the opportunity to access statistical data in real time and thus develop accurate strategies and public policies based on structural and relevant information.

Romania has developed a National Action Plan that will implement Romania's National Strategy on Sustainable Development, through close consultation with the civil society, academia and the private sector. The Plan's scope is to create by 2030 an effective, efficient and transparent governance structure on sustainable development and not only. We are also working towards creating durable changes in society, thus consolidating the adoption of principles of sustainable development by all spheres of society, from stakeholders to every citizen, as an essential condition to achieving all targets by 2030.

Keeping in mind that the most valuable resource is people, we aimed to go further with our vision and developed an occupational standard of sustainable development expert, thus creating the possibility for higher education institutions to conduct postgraduate courses in this area. Through this type of professional training, the staff of the central and local public administration will be able to ensure coherence in the governmental act and strategic planning for sustainable development. By 2025, we intend to train another 2,000 civil servants from public institutions at central and local levels. In promoting policy coherence for sustainable development, we work toward a deep integration of the SDGs into horizontal practices and tools through the establishment of a Center of Excellence for Public Administration in the field of Sustainable Development and a Virtual Resource Center for the localization of sustainable development goals, One-stop-shop Romania 2030.

These are just some examples of how Romania managed to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic challenges, by remaining true to a vision of a better present and future for generations to come. Romania envisions itself as a catalyst, holding a key role as a sustainable development

hub in the UNECE region, a major vector of democracy and rule of law. Our involvement in the United Nations is a testament of our beliefs and actions.

UNECE has an extensive and significant role in the regional cooperation. We all have to work together states, governments, companies, different stakeholders to successfully achieve the Agenda 2030 goals.

**We need to work collectively and in an efficient manner, with strengthened and more coordinated responses and resilience to critical risks.**

We are meeting today at a time when our neighbor Ukraine is facing a great turmoil, a situation that we have pledged to avoid. **As the preamble of the UN Charter echoes: “We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourges of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind”** we now have a greater responsibility on our shoulders, greater than it has ever been. **Our actions today decide tomorrow’s history**, we must once again prove the power that multilateral diplomacy holds and we must demonstrate that it can deliver efficient results.

As leaders we are faced with hard choices every day, but at this point it is no longer a matter of choices. We cannot determine which is more or less important, every single decision balances the future we prepare for today’s youth. We must find the power to act collectively on every single issue, at last this is what the 2030 Agenda is all about: **the importance of coming together as a global community.**

Thank you!