



United Nations General Assembly – 73rd Session

Agenda Item 8 – General Debate

26 September 2018, morning session

Address by H. E. Mr. Klaus Werner IOHANNIS, President of Romania

Madame President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am particularly honoured to address this year's session, as 2018 is a symbolic year for Romania. One hundred years ago, the Romanians accomplished their great dream, the dream of living together in one united country.

The **Centenary of the United and Modern Romania** is not only about the past of my country but even more about the future. And my strong conviction is that a safer and prosperous future for the Romanian people can be accomplished only alongside **peaceful and sustainable societies** all over the world.

In its turn, the United Nations has reasons to celebrate this year. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** is turning 70 years old, and so is the **International Law Commission**, the main UN body whose function is to shape international law in order for the international community to become a better place where International Rule of Law governs all of us.

These anniversaries are a reminder of our political determination to stand up for our fundamental rights and law, although the road has neither been short nor easy.

Our action as political leaders is driven by the responsibility towards our people.

We serve our people when working with the United Nations, and each and every citizen needs to see a concrete impact on his or her daily life, and a positive change.

I therefore welcome the invitation of the President of the General Assembly to comment on the continuing relevance of the United Nations for the lives and wellbeing of all peoples.

We have to explain the current challenges to peace, equity and sustainability of our societies and to speak more about the role of the UN in addressing them.

We have to explain that we face serious threats to security, that terrorism needs a globally coordinated response, that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remain existential threats to global security.

Pointing them out is necessary, but not enough. We need to address them by coming up with clear solutions.

Romania is working in this respect in its region. We continue to witness unresolved conflicts in the wider Black Sea area that pose serious threats to the region itself and to the international security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We adopted three years ago the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** – a unique universal agenda for progress – and we have set 17 ambitious goals with significant impact on the most pressing challenges on the everyday-life of our people.

Romania, like many other countries, is in a learning process, a very useful exercise being the presentation of our National Voluntary Review in the High Level Political Forum this July.

At the same time, we have a lot to share from our own experience. Therefore, Romania will host in April 2019, in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, a regional conference on "*2030 Agenda: Partnerships for Sustainable Development*".

Countries from our region will have the chance to share good practices and lessons learned in the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in identifying strategic opportunities for addressing key social drivers in our region, as well as looking at areas of sustainability and common interest.

From another perspective, we are satisfied with our joint effort to prepare for the adoption, by the end of 2018, of some very important international cooperative frameworks. The **Global Compacts on Refugees** and, respectively, **on Regular Migration** will generate a common approach on migration and displaced persons at global level. Also, the negotiations on a **Global Pact for Environment** are about to start. The elaboration of the **convention on conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction** is in progress.

A new *Ocean Conference* will take place soon-aimed at continuing the involvement for a safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans at global level. In addition, the **UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy** and the **Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism** remain paramount.

The list of achievements having a direct impact on our lives does not stop here, as we do not stop to advance our work together in the UN and I believe that we can do more.

We still have to work on making the whole UN system, including the Security Council, truly coordinated, efficient, effective, transparent, accountable and fit to the realities of the international community in the 21st century.

The next months will be decisive for the UN reform. The implementation of the framework put in place as a result of the tireless work of the Secretary General, with the support of the member

states, will reflect the level of political determination of each country. Romania will continue to support this effort.

As the next **Presidency of the EU Council** in the first half of 2019, Romania will work with determination to strengthen the EU-UN partnership. And when I speak about engagement I don't just mean politicians and diplomats. We have to reach out to our younger people, representatives of the civil society, journalists, business people. We need them all for the cause of multilateralism and global leadership.

As you know, Romania runs for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the term 2020-2021. Through this candidature, we take our share of responsibility in the attempt to increase the effectiveness of the Council. We hope that our track-record within the UN will convince you once more that Romania is committed to support the United Nations work for peace and development for all its members.

Peace, development and justice are foundational pillars in our multilateral strategy.

We respect our partners and rely on dialogue. We count on your most valuable support for our candidature. Romania will be a responsible partner in promoting a common agenda of the UN.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have recognized the primary responsibility of the Security Council for international peace keeping and security in accordance with the UN Charter. As many crises are multidimensional today, the Security Council could play a more prominent role in addressing more aspects that impact peace and security.

For example, climate change has become one of the toughest global challenges. Its consequences – be it water shortage, food insecurity, displacement of people or rising sea levels – threaten lives all around the world.

In addition to the efforts of other UN platforms to tackle climate related risks, the Security Council could create the framework to address them in an integrated manner.

We welcomed the organisation of a debate in the Security Council this July on aspects of peace and security related to climate change and we are ready to follow-up on the topic if elected as a non-permanent member.

Ahead of the preparation of the **Secretary-General's Climate Summit** next year, Romania will host during its Presidency of the EU Council, in April 2019, an international conference on "*Building resilience to natural disasters*" – a platform to exchange views on how to assess and address more effectively climate-related security risks and to enhance the base for a resilient future.

Madame President of the General Assembly,

I thank you for the topic you have chosen for this debate and I congratulate you for the important responsibilities you have assumed. Let me extend our wishes of success, and reassure you of the full cooperation of Romania. Thank you!