

**Statement of the President of Romania,
H.E. Mr. Klaus-Werner Iohannis**

at the

**General Debate of the 77th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 20 September 2022

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary General,

Excellencies,

We live in difficult times. Our predecessors, who adopted the Charter of the United Nations, were “determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Almost eight decades later, peace is still under threat, this time from worrying new challenges – the most severe since the end of the Second World War.

We are witnessing, since February 24th, the dramatic consequences of the **unprovoked and illegal war started by the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, against Ukraine.**

We are also witnessing **exceptional solidarity from numerous countries united in their support for Ukraine**, a sovereign member of this Assembly and a victim of months of aggression against its civilians, basic infrastructure and economy.

The consequences of this war are global and are not limited to our security. They refer to blatant violations of norms and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights, and on sustainable development worldwide. **These should be of major concern for all of us, irrespective of how far we are from the conflict.**

Distinguished colleagues,

There is **no justification for a military aggression against a sovereign state.**

There is **no justification for bloodshed, destruction and human suffering.** It is our joint responsibility to come together and **uphold our common values** as members of the United Nations.

Democracy and universal human rights are legitimate aspirations for all humankind. We therefore **need to act now and support all who fight for freedom and democracy.** We should guarantee the respect of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of all States.

Romania supported and will continue to support Ukraine as its people are also fighting for **our** values and democracy.

Romania opened its frontiers and its heart to all those seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the conflict, **over 2.3 million Ukrainians have crossed our borders.**

Romania has offered not only emergency assistance, but also **medium and long-term support for those who decided to stay in our country**, with free access to education, health services and the labor market. In addition, we offered direct humanitarian assistance and put in place a logistic hub for coordinating the international humanitarian assistance from the entire world. **Our support will not stop here.**

We know that our response, especially to this war, will shape our common future. **Our support for peace should be voiced now, louder than ever.**

In defending our universal values, it is essential to stay united and bring everyone on board, including those who are still hesitating. **Engagement and dialogue are crucial to overcome divisions and,** at the same time, to **counter the spread of falsehoods and propaganda.**

Distinguished audience,

The challenges we face today, such as the **impact of climate change and loss of biodiversity, energy insecurity, lack of access to food and education, and social inequities,** are becoming more and more severe. They need **responses and solutions,** as our citizens are rightfully asking for them. For all these issues, **common action is the only way forward.**

Energy security is a **global concern, requiring joint solutions and responsible action.** We must **avoid the use of energy as a tool of blackmail.** Energy security requires **strategic investments in renewables, in nuclear power** - with new future-oriented projects such as small modular reactors - or **in hydrogen.** It also requires energy prices that are **accessible** for our citizens.

Ensuring energy security goes hand in hand with the **green transition** for resilient and climate-neutral economies.

The **nexus between climate change and peace and security** should be more prominent in our discussions, including in the Security Council.

Despite our efforts, we have not moved past the **triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss**. All our efforts in the European Union, and in coordination with international partners, are meant to identify and implement the best solutions to these serious difficulties.

In two months' time, we shall meet in Egypt for the **COP27** and additional commitments towards climate neutrality are necessary, along with the implementation of the decisions already made. **The clock is ticking, our Planet cannot wait any longer.**

Raising awareness, **educating future generations on environmental protection and fighting climate change** is of utmost importance and a topic very close to my heart.

Education is a top priority for Romania, and a strategic investment in our future. Thus, we also look forward to the **Summit of the Future**, to be held in 2024.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Weaponizing access to food and restricting it around the world are unacceptable. In order to support the Ukrainian economy and help manage the global food crisis, **Romania has acted in a responsible way by facilitating the export of more than 4 million tons of Ukrainian grain**, which represents 60% of the grain exported by Ukraine, through our ports on the Danube and at the Black Sea, since the beginning of the crisis.

We also commend the role of the UN Secretary General in reaching the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is, as he symbolically put it, **a beacon of hope** in a world that truly needs it.

Distinguished audience,

Romania has been arguing for a long time to keep the **so-called protracted or frozen conflicts high on our agenda and to focus on how to solve them.**

The war against Ukraine taught us that, in such contexts, the absence of war does not mean peace. Protracted conflicts such as those in the Black Sea region **need to be addressed without delay.**

Distinguished delegates,

United Nations peacekeeping has always been an instrument of paramount importance in safeguarding peace and security.

Romania's solid contribution to various operations around the globe stands proof of our commitment. We need to ensure that, in line with the **Action for Peacekeeping agenda**, the UN peacekeeping missions **become more effective and contribute to political solutions to conflicts**, placing **human rights** at the core of their action.

We also need a steadfast action of the international community to **protect and promote human rights.** **We must strengthen the UN Human Rights system** and ensure sustainable and adequate funding of all its activities.

We recognize the essential role played **by civil society actors and the human rights defenders** in the promotion and protection of human rights. Ensuring proper functioning of **democratic institutions**, upholding **respect for the rule of law** and guaranteeing the fundamental rights and freedoms remain fundamental. It is with these firm convictions that Romania has presented its **candidacy for a seat in the UN Human Rights Council**, for the term 2023-2025.

Distinguished audience,

I would like to conclude by stressing that we need to **restore public trust in effective multilateralism.** Only together will we be able to identify and implement sustainable solutions in order to achieve world peace, prosperity, fulfillment of human rights and a healthy environment for the future generations!