

Speech of Mr. Teodor Meleşcanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Romania
ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
Agenda point : *Working on Global Arena*
(Bucharest, 20th of March 2019)

Honorable co-Presidents, Mr Joseph Owona Kono and Mr Louis Michel,

Distinguished members of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and a distinguished pleasure to welcome so many guests in Bucharest and to address this distinguished parliamentary gathering.

We have been impressed by the number of countries represented (over 50) and by the effort made by many of you to travel so long to be here.

Today's world is more interconnected than ever, and, therefore, today's threats and challenges should rally countries together.

People across the globe still suffer from poverty, inequality and injustice. Natural disasters cause increasing damage every season; terrorist attacks deepen the sense of insecurity; tensions over identity, cultural and faith meanings are raising even within open and tolerant societies.

No other path serves us better than working together in our quest for viable solutions to tackle current global challenges.

Working on education, ensuring prosperity and well-being of our people is the most efficient way to prevent instability and crisis. It is our responsibility, individually and collectively, **administrations or legislatives**, to remain responsive and govern for all those who entrusted us with political leadership.

Parliaments bear the responsibility to hold government to account, but citizens ultimately bear the responsibility to hold us all to account.

Distinguished guests,

The topic on the session's agenda is about **working on global arena**. To match with the topic, I have selected one of the most dangerous global treats of our days which requires work at this level – **climate change**.

Overwhelmed by widespread destruction left by ruthless hurricanes in Central America, Caribe, South-West Pacific or drought in Africa, we understood that extreme weather events happen almost everywhere around the world. We all are affected in a way or another. Neither the national richness, nor the political power can protect us from the consequences of extreme weather. Social and economic impacts are often huge.

Europe, considered long time safer from climate disruption, experienced, in its turn, extreme heat waves in the last years. Romania has its own painful experience as a country exposed to a large number of natural risks and we have learned our lesson: Climate change is not just about remote islands and about distant future. It is about today and it is about our fellows too.

Until recently, climate change, as such, was rather absent from the public speech. It has been considered mainly an environmental issue and less a security one. If we do not change that and act now on prevention side, irreversible and catastrophic climate disruption will be happen more and more.

Climate adaptation and mitigation is a common responsibility. Heads of state or simple citizens, ministers or parliamentarians, civil society or political parties, we all should have our degree of engagement. Each of us can have the ambition to lead by our own example.

Confronting effectively the global warming requires awareness and a strong political will to **act responsible at home and at global arena**, as part of a collective endeavor. The general mobilization is indispensable. Only together, **at global arena**, we can be effective.

In this context, we need more voices in favor of promoting multilateral arena and an international order based on rules – as this is the way to address effectively and efficiently global challenges.

The choice of the **Paris Agreement** to create the essential multilateral framework governing global action and to deal with climate change is open to everyone. We are confident that the Agreement provides a strong momentum for all countries to accelerate their climate action.

We have reached these conclusions, once more, during the Conference on *Building Resilience to Natural Disasters*, hosted by Romania, as current Presidency of the EU Council, on 12th of March, where we enjoyed the presence of many guests from five continents.

Many of our guests received with satisfaction the initiative of the UN Secretary General to convene the UN Climate Action Summit this autumn. It would be a gesture of solidarity with the effort of the Secretary General to unite us in the fight against one of the most serious threat of our days.

The UN Climate Action Summit will be held during the same period as SDG Summit and the High Level Dialogue on Financing for Sustainable Development, which gives us the opportunity to make our action more coherent. *2019 could be a critical year for climate action and development.*

Distinguished guests,

Romania, a country committed traditionally to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, runs for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council this year, in June.

Our candidacy is about my country's engagement in supporting the efforts of the international community to ensure peace and security; it is about unyielding and enduring commitment to peace, development and justice.

Our track-record within the UN speaks by itself about the seriousness of our commitments over the time. Four previous mandates in the Security Council brought us a wealth of experience, instrumental in supporting the United Nations to work for peace and development for all its members.

Our main lesson was: more respect for each other; more mutual understanding and openness; dialogue and inclusiveness. This is the attitude we are ready to continue with.

In terms of concrete contributions, I just want to flag that Romania has always been a contributor to the UN missions. We have been serving under the UN flag in peacekeeping missions for more than 28 years, with more than 10.000 Romanian Blue Helmets (men and women).

Romanian military personnel, as well as police and gendarmerie officers have operated and are currently operating in over 20 missions around the world, from Pakistan and Mali to Angola and Haiti. In a critical time for the African and international security, we stand ready to support this year one of the most complex peacekeeping mission – MINUSMA in Mali.

And because I have referred to climate change, if elected, Romania will also concentrate on climate change as a threat in itself and a threat multiplier and will be a powerful advocate for a more prominent role of the Security Council in dealing with climate change in an integrated manner.

I want to reassure you, that Romania is committed to working with you all, to achieve real, tangible and lasting progress in securing a safer future for our children, free from fear in all its forms.

I wish you a very nice stay in Romania and a very fruitful exchange in this session.

Thank you!