



**Statement at the first Ministerial meeting of the
Coalition for the Sahel held by videoconference,
12 June 2020**

**Mr. Dan Neculaescu,
State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Romania**

Your Excellencies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

Distinguished representatives of International Organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Romania feels particularly privileged for having the opportunity to address such a distinguished audience, on the occasion of the first meeting of the International Coalition for the Sahel. Our countries and organizations share the vivid interest in addressing the current security and humanitarian issues that our partners are facing in the Sahel.

Despite our collective actions up to this moment, the situation has not been improved. The trend is rather negative. However, we should applaud the initiatives and efforts that we are witnessing. In this sense, Romania welcomes the creation of the International Coalition of the Sahel, as a useful tool to better coordinate all the actions taken for the stabilization in the region. We should synchronize and avoid overlaps.

Our efforts should build on the local and regional ownership. We ask for active and urgent implementation of the political commitment and also for operational engagement. Consolidating state institutions is our common goal and this should allow the return of the state authority in the places where the civil population became a target for the terrorist groups. In this regard, we believe to be of utmost importance to prioritise the peace agreement in Mali, an action that will contribute greatly to the stability of the whole region.

Stability and economic development are highly dependent on a secure environment. In this regard, we would like to highlight the Romanian contribution to MINUSMA, where we have deployed a contingent of 120 soldiers and 4 military helicopters for one year, until October 2020. In fact, the Romanian contingent is responsible for highly specialized missions, focused on medical evacuation, search and rescue, troops transport and aerial observation and patrolling. Alongside the UN efforts, Romania also is part of the EU training missions that are currently undergoing in the Sahel.

The Romanian contribution to the Sahel extends beyond military and police involvement. We have provided highly specialized courses or scholarships to young officials, experts and researchers from this region. In this regard, we would like to mention a special course in reconstruction and post-conflict stabilization that we have developed for the last 13 years.

In 2019, we inaugurated a partnership with the African Union concerning this seminar, which was held, for the first time, in Addis Ababa and gathered multiple experts from several African countries, including from Sahel. The course will continue in 2020, in the same format as last year, conditions allowing.

Mes Dames et Messieurs,

La Roumanie partage volontiers avec l'espace francophone son expérience visant le maintien de la paix. A partir 2015, la Roumanie a apporté sa contribution à la formation du futur personnel des missions ONU de maintien de la paix, y inclus pour les étudiants provenant du Sahel, à l'intermédiaire du Cours Supérieur International en langue française organisé, à Bucarest, par la Gendarmerie Roumaine et la Gendarmerie Nationale Française, avec le soutien de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

By providing support for the Sahel and political support for the reforms, Romania remains committed to the international efforts conducted in the region, acknowledging the import regional role of the African Union and ECOWAS, in complementing the UN, EU, EU MS and other like-minded actors.

In conclusion, we reconfirm that Romania will continue to be present and support the activities of the international actors which are summarised under Pillar III of the International Coalition of the Sahel, namely Support for the return of the State and administrations in the territory.

Thank you for your attention.