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Dear Comrades and Friends,

The Second Congress of the Socialist Unity Front which opens today is an event of utmost importance in the social and political life of the country, in the development of our socialist democracy, a powerful manifestation of the unity and cohesion of the entire people, of its resolve to unflinchingly implement the policy of the Party and State for the building of socialism and communism in Romania.

Since the Congress of the Socialist Unity Front is held only two months after the Twelfth Congress of the Party — which adopted the targets of the new stage in the construction of the multilaterally developed socialist society in Romania — the focus of discussions will be on the documents and decisions adopted by the great forum of the communists, on the tasks of implementing the grand programme of the Party. We can say that the present Congress of the Socialist Unity Front is a logical complement to the Party Congress, a forum of our entire nation, which is resolved to ensure the triumph of socialism and communism in Romania, the permanent strengthening of the power of our homeland, of its independence and sovereignty.

At the same time, this Congress marks the beginning of the campaign for the election of deputies to the Grand National Assembly and to the people's councils — an event signifying the ample participation of the broad masses of working people in the government of society, the free exercise of democratic rights and freedoms, the unhampered assertion of the will and aspirations of the entire socialist nation which is shaping its own destiny of welfare and happiness in a conscious and sovereign way.

This Congress has a particular significance also due to the fact that it occasions the establishment at a national level of the Socialist Unity Front's own organization which will ensure the unitary leadership of the organizations recently set up throughout the country as a new, superior, form of organized participation of the masses in the political life of our society.

The Congress of the Socialist Unity Front is called upon to analyse, with responsibility and exigency, the activity carried out by the component organizations during the past five years, and to establish the ways and means to more efficiently fulfil its role of uniting the energy and force of the whole people for the implementation of the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, to secure the advance of the homeland on the bright road of socialism and communism, and Romania's increasing assertion in the world as a free, sovereign and independent state.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

In the period since the first Congress of the Socialist Unity Front, our people scored remarkable achievements in all fields of socialist construction. The successes recorded in the fulfilment of the current five-year plan have brought about new and profound transformations in the life of our entire society and an overall rise in the people's welfare.

The achievements in industrial output should be especially emphasized. Its volume is expected to increase by 70 per cent during the current five-year period, at an average annual rate of about 11 per cent, which is higher than initially planned. By the end of 1980 our industry will produce over 50 times more than in 1938. We now have a modern, dynamic industry, with an advanced technology and capable to solve the most complex problems of contemporary progress, to secure the provision of high-productivity equipment and plant to the whole economy — a solid basis of our socialist society, of the advance to communism.

Considerable progress has also been scored in agriculture. During the current five-year period agricultural output is over 30 per cent bigger than in the previous five-year period. This is reflected in the permanent improvement of the supply of farm produce and foods to the population and of raw materials to industry, as well as in the growing role and importance of agriculture in the development of our socialist society.

We have implemented a vast investment programme. As I pointed out at the Party Congress, between 1976 and 1980 investments are worth approximately 970,000 million lei, that is practically as much as the total volume of investments in the three previous five-year plan periods.

Remarkable achievements were recorded in the rational, unitary and harmonious distribution of the productive forces throughout the country's territory, thereby securing the rapid economic and social progress of all counties and localities in our homeland.

During the current five-year period the gains of the techno-scientific revolution have powerfully asserted themselves in all fields, the network of research units was improved, and the role of science in promoting technical progress increased. We also scored important results in the modernization of education, in personnel training, the development of culture and the arts, the enrichment of the spiritual life of the entire society.

The economic and social development of the country has ensured conditions for the successful implementation of the programme for the faster raising of the living standard of the entire people. The first stage in the remuneration increase was completed and we have proceeded to apply the provisions of the second stage, which will result in a rise by approximately 32 per cent of the remuneration of the working people during the current five-year period, as against the initially planned 18—20 per cent. Pensions and children's allowances were increased and a large-scale programme of housing construction was carried out. All this once again highlights the fact that everything that is done in our country at present is for the benefit of the entire people, that the supreme goal of Party policy, the essence of the multilaterally developed socialist society is to ensure the welfare and happiness of the entire people, to raise the civilization level of our socialist nation.

During this period further steps were made to improve relations of production and social relations. We can say we have achieved a unitary system of government of the country by the people, an economic and social democracy of a new type which enables us to largely harness the initiative, experience and creative capacity of the masses in all sectors of activity.

One of the great gains of socialist constructions in our homeland is the just solution, in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary outlook, of the national question, the provision of equal conditions of work and life for all the citizens of the homeland, irrespective of nationality. The coinhabiting nationalities are actively participating in political life, in the government of society and, in close brotherhood and collaboration with the Romanian

working people, they make an active contribution to the progress and prosperity of the common homeland — socialist Romania.

During this period a sustained ideological, political and educational activity was conducted to shape the new man, to raise the socialist consciousness of the masses and resolutely apply the principles of socialist ethics and equity.

The achievements in the current five-year period conclusively highlight the force and vitality of the socialist system, the huge creative capacity of our people, its élan and determination to unflinchingly fulfil the policy of the Romanian Communist Party, the correctness of Party policy based on the consistent application of objective laws to the concrete conditions in our country.

A substantial contribution to all the great victories won by our people has been made by the Socialist Unity Front, its component organizations, which have helped to unite all working people, irrespective of nationality, in the effort for the economic and social development of the country.

For the fruitful activity carried out during this period, and for the successes recorded in the implementation of the Party Programme, I warmly congratulate from this high rostrum the organizations belonging to the Socialist Unity Front, the workers, peasants, intellectuals, all working people — Romanians, Magyars, Germans, and of other nationalities — our entire people and wish them new and greater achievements in the implementation of the historic decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, in the permanent improvement of the living standard and civilization level of the entire people.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

The policy documents adopted by the Party Congress ensure the raising of our society, of all the work for building socialism and communism in Romania, to a qualitatively higher level. They open wide prospects of work and creation to our nation, and outline a vast and inspiring programme for the manysided progress of socialist Romania. The development and modernization of the techno-material basis of society, the growth of the national economy at a sustained rate, the powerful assertion of the techno-scientific revolution will secure a rise in the civilization level of the entire people, the further consolidation of the socialist mode of production, the strengthening of the material and spiritual potential of the country, of the independence and sovereignty of socialist Romania.

The fulfilment of the targets set by the Party Congress requires an intense activity of our entire people. We shall have to take more resolute steps for the harnessing of our own resources in order to further develop and enlarge our raw material and energy basis. We must constantly work for a rational use of raw materials, fuel and energy, for the promotion of modern technologies that secure fuel and energy savings and high-grade utilization.

Transition to a new, superior quality in all economic and social activity requires sustained efforts in all sectors of material production in order to more rapidly raise labour productivity and to promote the new gains of the modern techno-scientific revolution more intensively. It is also necessary to secure the firm application of the new economic and financial mechanism, of the principles of worker's self-management and self-administration, the appropriate administration of the material and financial assets which society has entrusted to each collective. We shall have to take concerted action so that the productive units planned to be built in the forthcoming period are completed and start operating on schedule and at the established capacity.

Sustained activity has to be carried out to develop and modernize agriculture, a sector where we must carry out a profound revolution both in the techno-material basis and in the organization of production. The State and cooperative agro-industrial councils, all agricultural units must see to it that the most advanced technologies and methods of labour organization are applied, they must promote strict order and discipline in order to promptly and efficiently perform farming operations, thereby securing ever bigger crops.

Concurrently with the expansion of material production, we shall have to secure a further intensification of scientific activity, the improvement of education, the development of culture and the arts, the firm implementation of the Party Programme for the permanent raising of the material and spiritual well-being of the people !

I am certain that our entire working class, the peasantry and intelligentsia, all the citizens of the homeland, irrespective of nationality, will work with all their energy, closely united under the leadership of the Party, in order to fulfil the plans for 1980 and for the 1976-1980 five-year period, to thoroughly prepare the transition to the implementation of the next five-year plan and the successful fulfilment of the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, which represents a new stage in the socialist development of Romania.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

The Socialist Unity Front has a most important role in the system of our socialist democracy. It is increasingly asserting itself as a higher form in which the efforts of the entire nation are pooled and coordinated, and our people manifests its will and determination to implement the programme of socialist and communist construction, to deliberately build a bright, free and dignified future for itself. Comprising the mass and public organizations, all the social classes and sections in our system, the Socialist Unity Front is an expression of the community of interests and aspirations of our entire people, of the relations of collaboration, fraternity and solidarity among all the working people regardless of nationality. It illustrates the far-reaching changes that have occurred in the social structure of this country and the prospects for all classes and sections of working people to draw closer together for a continuing homogeneization of society. The Socialist Unity Front is, indeed, the broadest and most representative organization of our democracy, the context in which the masses of the people unite round the Party, which is the leading political force of the entire society.

A particularly important role in the Socialist Unity Front is played by the trade union organizations, which greatly help to mobilize the working people — in their capacity of producers, owners and beneficiaries — for the fulfilment of the five-year plan, the solution of the problems people have in their life and work, and for the implementation of the Party's policy of raising the living standard of the people.

The women's organizations, too, are making a most important contribution within the Socialist Unity Front. Our Party has a high opinion of the women's contribution to the achievement of this country's aims of economic and social development, to the good administration of the homeland's localities, to the education of the younger generations, and it creates conditions in which they can participate more and more actively in the management of all fields of activity, of the whole society.

An important role is also played by the Union of Communist Youth, which is present along the entire front of socialist construction. It is working consistently for the cultivation in the ranks of the young generation of devotion to the Party and people, of keen interest in knowledge, in acquaintance with the latest gains of modern science and technology, of dialectical materialism, our outlook on the world and life, of the determination to do everything for the triumph of socialism and communism in Romania.

An extensive activity for the organization, education and involvement of their members in the implementation of the policy of our Party and State, in the material and spiritual progress of the homeland is also carried out by the other public organizations that are members of the Socialist Unity Front — cooperative unions, creative artists' unions, professional organizations.

The councils of working people belonging to the coinhabiting nationalities — an expression of the Party's concern with ensuring the active participation of all nationalities, on a fully equal footing, in social and political life, in the government of society — are making an important contribution within the Socialist Unity Front and in the entire life of our society.

The setting up last year of the Socialist Unity Front's own organizations has raised the Front's activity to an even higher level, enhancing its role in the country's social and political life. These measures are consonant with the actual requirements of our ad-

vance on the road of socialism and communism. They are demanded by the high political and civic awareness of the masses of working people, by the process of consolidation of the unity of the whole people, by the constant homogeneization of society, by the need for an active, organized participation of all citizens in the political life of the country. We proceed from the principle that at present and in the future the growing role of the Party as the leading political force of the whole nation implies an ever more intimate association of its life with the life of the entire people, and its ever stronger linking with the broad masses of people. The building of socialism and communism requires the permanent broadening of the political and ideological horizon of the working people, a growing understanding of the objective laws of social development, so that every citizen should be able to fully assert himself as an active, fully conscious factor in the fulfilment of the aims and ideals of the new society. Having the task to consciously organize and direct the large-scale revolutionary process of advance to communism in step with the growing awareness and understanding of the working people, the Party has been constantly developing the forms of collaboration with the broad masses of the people, of public discussion of its political line, Programme and entire activity, of the citizens' effective participation in the entire political life of society.

In this way we are improving our socialist democracy, based on fully equal rights for all citizens of the homeland, regardless of nationality, on the unrestricted, concrete participation of all in the government of society. This democracy is infinitely superior to all forms of capitalist democracy, which are based on exploitation and oppression and in which the formally proclaimed rights and liberties are in fact annulled by great economic, political and social inequalities. Our Congress and its composition actually testify to the high-level democracy of our society, and the active participation of the people in the management of our social and political life.

The decision to create Socialist Unity Front organizations has elicited wide response and aroused particular interest in the masses of working people. This is conclusively demonstrated by the fact that the membership of the Socialist Unity Front's own organizations has risen to almost 2,500,000. I also want to emphasize the spirit of great responsibility in which the assemblies for the setting up of these organizations took place, and the great competence with which debates were conducted at the communal, town, municipal and county conferences of the Socialist Unity Front.

I must say that as I listened on television to many participants belonging to those organizations I could not distinguish between them and Party members. I consider that in tackling problems many participants showed great responsibility and extensive political and theoretical knowledge, which are sometimes superior to those of Party members. This demonstrates that our people's socialist awareness has grown considerably. This is evidence of the tremendous political, ideological and educational work carried out by the Party and our socialist State. As communists, we actually hold the view that the Party itself will disappear at a certain stage. But this will not happen following the creation of a void; it will be the result of a symbiosis between Party members and non-Party members, in which all will abide by communist principles; there will be a society with a lofty revolutionary awareness, a society in which all will work firmly and deliberately for the building of socialism and communism, for ensuring the liberty and independence of the homeland, and securing a worthy place among the free nations of the world. In those debates, the citizens of our country voiced their firm determination to implement the Party's policy, a policy which is in perfect agreement with the vital interests and aspirations for progress of the entire nation. This is another expression of the force of our socialist system, of the people's unbreakable unity around the Party, and demonstrates the broad and comprehensive character of our system of democratic government of society. Moreover, the creation of these organizations shows that our Party trusts the broad masses of people, their great awareness and understanding, and that it highly values the activity of the masses, of the people, the creator of its own destiny, of our homeland's free history.

Proceeding from these considerations and with a view to better adjustment to the stage entered by Romanian society, th present development stage of our socialist democracy, we conside that the Socialist Unity Front should from now on be named th Socialist Democracy and Unity Front. Along this line, the socialis unity front organizations should be named socialist democrac and unity organizations and have a national leading body of thei own. The chairman of the Central Committee of the socialis democracy and unity organizations should also be deputy chair man of the National Council of the Socialist Democracy and Unit Front.

The socialist democracy and unity organizations are revolu tionary patriotic mass political organizations which organize an carry out their activity within the Socialist Democracy and Unit Front. They will play an important role in the Socialist Democrac and Unity Front, in the organization of participation, in clos collaboration and under the Party's guidance, of all categories o working people in the management of various fields of activity, o public affairs on a local and national level.

The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front — which nominate candidates for all bodies of State power — will also nominat members of the socialist democracy and unity organizations. More over, members of the socialist democracy and unity organization who prove to be capable and competent, determined to selflessl serve the interests of society, the cause of socialism and communism of the homeland's independence and sovereignty, will be promote to various management posts. The Socialist Democracy and Unit Front and its councils will also have to enhance their contributio to the wide and systematic information of the working people of public opinion on all matters in our political and social life, t explain the purpose of the measures and actions undertaken b the Party to rally the masses for a conscious participation in th implementation of these measures. Within the Socialist Democrac and Unity Front we shall have to organize public meetings calle "Tribune of Democracy", where various problems of our econo mic, social and political life will be discussed in an organized wa with the mass of citizens. At the Tribune of Democracy meeting — to be held every month under the guidance of the councils of th Socialist Democracy and Unity Front — citizens will meet representa tives of Party and State bodies, deputies, and executives in the econo my, will ask them questions and receive answers regarding all the oretical and practical aspects of the home and foreign policy of ou Party and State, socialist construction and international life. As result, citizens will exercise their liberties and democratic right ever more actively and all the working people in the towns an villages will participate directly in the discussion of the problem of general interest and the solution of public affairs, in raising th political awareness and civic responsibility of all the members o society. Naturally, all the decisions and the laws of the countr will be discussed within the Socialist Democracy and Unity Fron in the future, too, as they have been so far, so that the views an suggestions of the broad masses of people should be known befor these decisions and laws are submitted to the Grand Nationa Assembly for endorsement.

In connection with all these measures, corresponding improve ments will have to be made in the rules of the Socialist Democ racy and Unity Front by including provisions regulating its ne attributions and forms of activity, as well as the attributions an activity of the socialist democracy and unity organizations.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

The future activity of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Fron and of all its member organizations will have to be permanentl focused on the mobilization of the working people for the imple mentation of the decisions taken by the Twelfth Party Congres The Directives and other programmes adopted by the Party Con gress must become the programme of the Socialist Democrac and Unity Front and the programmes of territorial economic an social development must also be the programmes of the socialis democracy and unity organizations.

The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must also play a important role in the organization and conduct of mass contro of the manner in which Party and State decisions are implemente

in various sectors of socialist construction, including the sectors that help provide ever better living and working conditions for the whole people.

An important objective on which the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must permanently concentrate is an intense political and educational activity aimed at raising the cultural level and broadening the understanding of the masses, at shaping the new, advanced man of our society, at widely promoting in all social life the principles of socialist ethics and equity. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must actively help to intensify and enrich the cultural-educational activity carried out in the setting of the Song to Romania national festival. More systematic activity should also be conducted to disseminate modern scientific knowledge, explain the objective laws of historical and social evolution, correctly interpret phenomena in nature and society, and enable the masses to form a progressive scientific outlook of the world and life. All political-educational activity must be pervaded by a strong revolutionary spirit, combat retrograde behaviour, backward mentalities, and cultivate the lofty ideals of socialism and communism, the scientific theory of historical and dialectical materialism. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must constantly cultivate the noble feelings of socialist patriotism in the consciousness of the working people, make a most active contribution to the strengthening of the unity and fraternity of the working people of Romanian, Magyar, German and other nationalities in their common work and struggle for the building of the new system, for the progress and flourishing of our homeland — socialist Romania. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must also carry out a steady activity for the development of the spirit of international solidadarity with all the progressive, anti-imperialist forces, with the struggle of the peoples for social progress, peace, independence, for every people's right to be free and the master of its destiny.

As part of the measures to improve the work of our socialist democracy organisms it also is necessary to raise the activity of the people's councils and of all bodies of State power and administration to a higher level so that they acquire more substance, be more closely linked to the masses, and work more efficiently for the correct and quick solution of the local problems of economic and social development. The people's councils, the deputies must periodically report to the local councils of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front on the implementation of Party and State decisions in the districts concerned, on their collaboration with the broad masses of citizens for the application of these decisions. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must democratically supervise the activity carried out by deputies at all levels, the manner in which they fulfil the attributions and responsibilities with which the electorate, society, has invested them.

In implementing the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, we shall also have to work for the further improvement of socialist law, for a greater role of public opinion in the enforcement and observance of the country's laws, the prevention and control of violations of the rules of social behaviour. Along this line we shall have to extend the experience gained by the workers' courts of justice in economic and social units and those attached to the executive committees of the people's councils.

In general we shall have to pay greater attention to the discussion at public meetings organized by the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front of various offences and violations of the law. It is only with the extensive participation of the masses that we shall be able to steadily reduce and eventually eliminate every kind of infringement and circumvention of the rules of social behaviour. We must make every member of society realize that his rights and duties demand that he firmly applies and observes the rules of social behaviour, proves that he feels responsible to society and acts in the general interests of the people, which also meet the interests of every citizen's well-being. There will have to be further improvement in the activity of the judicial bodies, the Tribunal and Procurator's Office, the Ministry of the Interior — the militia and security forces — which have to maintain public quiet, defend socialist and private property, and constantly consolidate the people's revolutionary achievements. Working in the spirit of law and of the decisions taken by our Party and State, the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front and its councils must play an active role in the control of all acts of disregard of the people's general interests, in cultivating the citizens' responsibility and respect for the country's laws, in enhancing order and discipline in our society.

We can and should discuss all problems at the assemblies of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front and the Tribune of Democracy. Nobody shall be deprived of anything because he expresses his opinion on a certain problem; but the discussion of any problem at these wide, democratic assemblies also implies the obligation to work afterwards — no matter whether there were differences of opinion on some problem — in the spirit of the decision taken by the majority, of the country's laws, ensuring the people's firm unity in the building of socialism and communism in Romania.

The highly disturbing international situation, which is tenser than at any time since the second world war, the danger of large-scale military confrontations looming in the world, require us to do everything we can to increase the unity and strength of our nation, of our socialist state, to enhance our entire people's will and determination to safeguard its revolutionary gains, its sacred right to be free and master in its own country, to make a new life for itself as it wishes, without any outside interference, to build its communist future on its ancient land. Tirelessly militating for détente and peace, and most firmly declaring, just as up to now, for general disarmament, we shall continue to pay special attention to the strengthening of the homeland's defence capacity, to the modern instruction and training of our armed forces so that they are ready to defend the revolutionary achievements, the independence and sovereignty of socialist Romania at any time. Starting from the principle that defence is the duty of the entire people, we shall also strengthen the activity of the patriotic guards and improve the military training of the youth, of all working people, since the fight against any imperialist aggression, the defence of the country's revolutionary gains and independence can only be the work of our entire Romanian people which, if need be, must rise as one man to safeguard its revolutionary achievements, independence and right to a free life. The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front will have to play an active part in developing the masses' socialist patriotism, in cultivating the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice of the entire people in defence of the homeland's supreme interests. Let us see to it that nothing can bend our people's will to live a free and dignified life, to defend its ancient land, the great revolutionary work it is achieving by the force of its hands and mind, to live in peace and friendship, on the basis of full equality and mutual respect, with all the peoples of the world.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

On March 9 this year we shall have elections for the Grand National Assembly and the communal, town, municipal and county people's councils. All conditions should be provided for the elections to be a great all-round demonstration of the adamant unity of the whole nation, of the force of socialist democracy, the solidity and superiority of our new system, in which the people is truly free and the master of its destiny. The recent amendments to the Constitution, the Electoral Law and the Law on the People's Councils have broadened the representation of the masses of working people in the bodies of State power and the possibility of exercising their constitutional rights of electing and being elected to these bodies. The criteria and norms that have been established ensure a more judicious representation in the people's councils and the Grand National Assembly of all categories of citizens, of the women and of members of the socialist democracy and unity organizations. In keeping with these regulations, a deputy chairman of the people's council will be a member of the local socialist democracy and unity organization. Moreover, at the coming elections, there will be several nominations for a seat in a greater number of constituencies; up to 95 per cent of all deputies to communal people's councils will be elected from among several candidates. The further extension of this practice will make it possible to promote to the Grand National Assembly and the people's councils the best citizens — workers, peasants, intellec-

tuals, housewives, working people in all fields of activity, Romanians, Magyars, Germans and people of other nationalities — who by their activity have proved that they are full of initiative, that they are good administrators, that they place the general interests of society above everything, and that they are ready to do everything for the implementation of Party and State policy, for the progress and flourishing of socialist Romania. More women will be nominated for the supreme body of the country and the people's councils, because women are a tremendous force in our society and have an important role in material production and spiritual creation, in all social life.

The Socialist Democracy and Unity Front has a particularly important role to play in the good preparation and progress of the electoral campaign. It must help secure a judicious representation of all categories of working people, including members of the socialist democracy and unity organizations, in the bodies of State power. The Front must see to it that candidates who enjoy great prestige in the masses and who, by their entire activity, are a guarantee for the successful fulfilment of the great objectives of the Programme for the constant development of our homeland, are elected to the Grand National Assembly and the people's councils.

Concurrently with preparations for the elections, the force and energy of the whole people should be mobilized for the implementation of the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, of the 1980 plan and the five-year plan. In every county, town and commune, all activities in anticipation of the elections must be based on the vigorous mobilization of the broad masses of citizens for the implementation of the territorial plan for the economic and social development of the counties and localities in our homeland.

Let us do everything for the preparation and progress of the elections for the Grand National Assembly and people's councils to mark an even stronger assertion of every citizen's great patriotic responsibility for the work and struggle for the implementation of the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress, the progress and flourishing of socialist Romania!

Let the elections of March 9 be a lofty expression of the profoundly democratic spirit of our society, of the active participation of the masses in the government of society, of the increasingly stronger ties between the Party and the working people, between the citizens and the bodies of State power!

Let us see to it that the elections become another strong demonstration of the unity and cohesion of our entire people round the Party, of its will and determination to still further strengthen the socialist State, to work unflinchingly for the implementation of the Programme for the building of the multilaterally developed socialist society in our homeland.

During the preparation and progress of the forthcoming elections, the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front and its organizations must firmly endeavour tc take advantage of the great superiority of our socialist democracy, which provides the setting for the effective government of society by the people and for the people, for the full assertion of our nation in the building of well-being and happiness, socialism and communism, and in the policy of détente and peace.

Dear Comrades and Friends,

While providing all conditions for the successful construction of socialism and communism in our homeland, our Party and State also carry out an intense international activity and make a most active contribution to the strengthening of collaboration and trust among nations, to the cause of collaboration, détente, independence and peace in the world.

Analysing the activity carried out in recent years, the Twelfth Party Congress has set the major foreign policy objectives and lines of our Party and State in the future. These objectives and lines proceed from the international situation and requirements today, from the far-reaching mutations that have occurred in the world balance of forces. As I have said before, of late we have been seeing an increase of international tension due to the trends of redividing the zones of influence, to the sharpening of economic and political contradictions between certain states or groups of states. In international life today there are elements which generate a real danger of the return to the old "cold war" policy and practices, seriously jeopardizing the cause of the peoples' independence and freedom, détente, security and peace on our planet. Under the circumstances, we believe that everything should be done to stop the dangerous course of tension, to firmly reject the trends of reverting to the "cold war" policy, to secure the continuation of the policy of détente and collaboration which requires unflinching respect for the national independence of each nation and people. This involves particular responsibilities on the part of the leaders of all states, and first of all of the large states, special responsibilities on the part of each people as to the way action is taken for the settlement of international issues, it calls for high responsibility, for refraining from any action which might add to international tension and endanger the peoples' peace and security.

In these conditions it is now more necessary than ever before to have a close union of the efforts made by the peoples, the progressive and anti-imperialist forces everywhere, their active collaboration, in order to prevent an aggravation of the international climate, to do away with the old imperialist policy of power and dictate, of interference in domestic affairs and violation of the peoples' liberty and independence, and to promote new interstate relations, a policy of international security, détente , independence and peace.

Romania is working consistently to develop relations of friendship and collaboration with all socialist countries, it declares for the strengthening of their cooperation and unity, considering that this is a primordial factor of the assertion of socialism in the world, of the growing role of the socialist countries in international life. At the same time, we are continually strengthening our collaboration and solidarity with the developing and non-aligned countries, with the young states that have embarked on independent development, as part of the general struggle against the imperialist and colonialist policies, for each people's right to freely assert itself on the road of economic and social development, as well as in the international life. Moreover, acting in the spirit of peaceful coexistence, we are promoting broad economic, technico-scientific and cultural relations with the developed capitalist states, with all the countries of the world, and actively participate in the international division of labour.

We firmly place at the basis of all our international relations the principles of fully equal rights, respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual advantage and renunciation of the use and threat of force. We believe that everything should be done to respect and defend each people's inalienable right to decide its fate in a sovereign way, to choose its path of development without any outside interference — this being the cornerstone of international peace, security and collaboration.

Our country is constantly working for the strengthening of collaboration and security in Europe, for the application of the Helsinki Conference documents as a unitary whole. Given the worsening of the current international situation, it is necessary to intensify efforts particularly for the establishment of European security, so that the improvement of the political climate on our continent makes an important contribution to the process of détente and peace all over the world. Given the present international tension , we have to prevent the worsening of relations in Europe and see to it that European security gives a stronger impetus to the struggle for a policy of détente and peace throughout the world. Romania is resolved to actively participate in the thorough preparation of the Madrid meeting, so that it should fully respond to the peoples' expectations, give a fresh impulse to broad, unhampered economic, scientific and cultural collaboration on the continent and, especially, lead to tangible military disengagement and disarmament measures without which one cannot speak of genuine security in Europe and the world. Given the situation created on our continent, where huge military arsenals have accumulated that can destroy the whole world, we consider that everything should be done to prevent the deployment of more missiles and nuclear weapons in Europe, whose only effect would be to increase insecurity in this part of the world and on the entire planet.

Romania has firmly declared for the settlement of all inter-state litigations only by peaceful means, by negotiations among the sides concerned, for a definite renunciation of the use of force, of military means, of armed clashes in inter-state relations. Life has proved that, through negotiations, through direct contacts in a spirit of equality and understanding, mutually satisfactory solutions can be found even to the most complex issues.

Our country manifests active solidarity with the national liberation movements, with the peoples fighting for their right to a free and independent life, for the abolition of any form of colonialist and neo-colonialist domination and oppression once and for all. The recent London agreement on a cease-fire in Rhodesia and the organization of elections open prospects for the Zimbabwe people to attain its aspirations to liberty and self-reliant development. We consider that everything must be done for the observance of this agreement and for the creation of all conditions so that the forthcoming elections should proceed freely, in keeping with the people's will, securing the way for the country's democratic, peaceful and independent development.

We also consider that great efforts must be made for solving the Middle East conflict by political means, for achieving a global, just and lasting peace which should lead to Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, to the settlement of the Palestinian people's problem, including the setting up of an independent Palestinian state, and guarantee the sovereignty and independence of all the states in the area.

A vital demand for mankind's progress is the halting of the arms race, the taking of firm disarmament measures, and particularly of nuclear disarmament measures. A balance, and guarantees of equal security for all states, should be achieved not by increasing armaments but by reducing them, by cutting down military budgets and forces. We most firmly declare for an end to the production and development of nuclear weapons and for the destruction of existing stockpiles. At the same time, we are for the adoption of measures to stop the manufacture of other mass destruction weapons, for the withdrawal of foreign troops and the dismantling of military bases on the territories of other states, the reduction of the activities of blocs and their concomitant dissolution. It is in the interest of all peoples that everything be done to halt the arms race so that the wonderful achievements of contemporary science should serve only man, his welfare and freedom, each nation, progress and peace on our planet.

We are paying special attention to the eradication of underdevelopment — an outcome of the old imperialist and colonialist policy of domination and oppression. It is obvious that one cannot speak about economic and political stability, about peace and progress unless an appropriate solution to this problem is found, which will lead to a more rapid progress of the underdeveloped states. With the ever closer interdependencies characterizing contemporary evolution, the eradication of underdevelopment and the building of a new international economic order grounded on equality and mutual advantage, and leading to the faster progress of the lagging countries, correspond to the interests not only of all peoples, but also of general economic development, and this applies to the developed countries as well, of the policy of détente and collaboration throughout the world. We consider that in this connection a particular role should be played by the United Nations Organization and we attach great importance to the thorough preparation of this year's special session of the UN General Assembly dealing with underdevelopment and the building of a new international economic order.

The settlement of the complex problems confronting mankind today calls for intensified efforts to democratize international relations, to ensure an active and equal participation in international life of all states, particularly the small and medium-sized countries, the developing countries, the non-aligned countries, which can and must have a stronger say and take an active part in the solution of all issues in the interest of the policy of national independence, détente and peace.

By actively contributing to the promotion of the entire policy of peace and collaboration of our Party and State, the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front must steadily develop and strengthen its relations, contacts and cooperation with similar organizations abroad, with various political organizations, must act more closely together with them, with all progressive and democratic forces for building a climate of peace and security on our continent and throughout the world, for disarmament, for a new international economic order, for the implementation of the hopes and aspirations of all nations to live in a better and juster world. Despite the gravity of the current international situation, we believe that the peoples everywhere, acting in unity and all firmness, can oppose a resolute NO to the policy of strength, a resolute NO to the policy of arming, a resolute NO to the policy of reverting to the "cold war", and ensure the triumph of the policy of national independence, détente, disarmament and peace !

Dear Comrades and Friends,

The Congress of the Socialist Democracy and Unity Front will have to take decisions of particular importance for the improvement of its activity, the ever stronger assertion of its role in our democratic system, in the social and political life of our country. I am convinced that the proceedings of the Congress will take place in an atmosphere of high responsibility, of criticism and self-criticism, and that the decisions adopted will voice the unanimous will of our people, of all the citizens of our homeland to work in close unity for the implementation of the home and foreign policy of the Party and State, for the successful implementation of the luminous Programme for the building of the many-sidedly developed socialist society and Romania's firm advance to communism.

Let us unite ever more closely the forces of the entire people, the initiative and revolutionary spirit of all the working people in our homeland — workers, peasants and intellectuals, young and old, men and women, Romanians, Magyars, Germans and of other nationalities — and, under the guidance of the Romanian Communist Party, the leading force of our entire nation, ensure the exemplary fulfilment of the decisions taken by the Twelfth Party Congress, the raising of the homeland to new summits of progress and civilization, the permanent strengthening of its material and spiritual force, of our independence and sovereignty, and more well-being for the whole people.

In this spirit I wish our Congress the best of success in its work !