

Statement by
Ambassador Cristian Istrate
Resident Representative of ROMANIA
at the 62nd Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic
Energy Agency (IAEA)
Vienna, 17 - 21 September 2018

Madam President,
Interim Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the European Union, and welcomes this opportunity to reaffirm, in national capacity, its commitment in promoting and developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Romania highly appreciates the IAEA's efforts and achievements in recent years under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the Agency, whom we wish speedy recovery. I take this opportunity to assure you all of Romania's support for the Agency. I am particularly convinced that the cooperation with the IAEA will be further strengthened and developed on both political and technical level.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Romania remains firmly committed to the Treaty, which is the key multilateral instrument for strengthening international peace, security and stability. In the context of the 50th Anniversary of the NPT's entry into force, Romania encourages all parties to display a forward looking approach, by doing their utmost for minimizing the different views, and look for the compromise to advance our shared goal of enhancing the integrity and authority of the NPT across all three pillars.

Romania is committed to pursuing the goal of nuclear disarmament, through a step-by-step approach, based on pragmatic and realistic measures that could provide for real and lasting progress on disarmament. One of these measures would be the entry into force of the CTBT. Another key and logical step remains the commencement of negotiations of a Treaty cutting off the fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives devices, a crucial instrument for advancing in the nuclear disarmament process.

Romania fully support the efforts of the AIEA to implement safeguards in the most effective and efficient way. In order to carry out effectively its verification function under the NPT, the IAEA needs legal authority, strong verification tools, cooperation with States and sufficient resources.

The Agency is able to provide credible assurances on the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in a State as a whole only for States with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements/CSAs and Additional Protocols/APs in force. In our view, a CSA together with an AP should become the verification standard for non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT.

Romania welcomes the work done by the IAEA in monitoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Continuing the full and rigorous implementation of the JCPOA is key, together with the full cooperation with the IAEA. Romania fully supports the IAEA's long-term mission of verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments.

My country remains firmly and fully committed to support the diplomatic efforts channeled to de-escalate the tensions on the Korean Peninsula and to determine the DPRK to abandon in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner its nuclear programs and to resume the cooperation with the AIEA. Until then, the existing sanctions should continue to be strictly enforced.

As a strong supporter of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, Romania hopes for tangible progress leading to the verifiable closure of the DPRK's nuclear test sites. This verification could benefit from relevant technical assistance, potentially including CTBTO expertise.

Madam President,

As stated on previous occasions, the risk of nuclear terrorism remains a global concern. In this respect, we underline the significant work of the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG), convening also in the margins of the General Conference, which carries out in an extensive format the goals of the Nuclear Security Summits, under the auspices of IAEA.

Romania ratified the main international instruments in the nuclear field, such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), the Amendment to CPPNM and the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSTANT). Therefore, we encourage all States that have not yet done so, to become parties to these relevant treaties and conventions and consequently to comply with all non-proliferation obligations and to create a strong nuclear safety and security regime.

Also, regional and international cooperation is vital to ensure nuclear security, which is why developing joint activities, training sessions and information sharing among governments are all necessary to prevent cross-border terrorist activities. Therefore, Romania fully supports the objectives of the *Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism* (GICNT) and welcomes the unique value that brings to the global nuclear security architecture and supporting partners in building national capabilities to combat terrorism. In line with our commitments to promote nuclear security at national, regional and international level, Romania, in close collaboration with GICNT, conducted, in 2017, a *Regional Exercise on Nuclear Forensics Support to Investigations - Olympus Reloaded*, focused on nuclear forensics, as a follow-up to *Exercise Olympus* in 2016. We strongly believe that events such as *Exercise Olympus* and *Olympus Reloaded* offer us the necessary tools to face the threat of nuclear terrorism as they underscore the essential role of preparedness.

Furthermore, between 24 and 25 April 2018, Romania hosted an important international conference dedicate to nuclear security issues in the Black Sea region. The event focused on the current security in the region, taking stock of the nuclear security regimes and enhancing the nuclear security cooperation in the region.

Romania recognizes that the use of the nuclear power requires a strong nuclear safety culture, including the adoption and implementation of the international safety standards. Taking into account the broader approach to strengthening nuclear safety, Romania as an IAEA Member State, reaffirms its commitment to implement the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which was endorsed by the General Conference in 2011.

As an EU Member State, Romania relies to the commitments assumed in this capacity. In relation to the safeguards issues, Romania receives annual inspections, jointly organized by EURATOM and IAEA, in order to verify the physical inventory of nuclear material. The verification missions carried-out did not identify any undeclared nuclear material and no indication of the diversion of nuclear material from the peaceful nuclear purposes.

Also, nuclear security is a well-defined concept within the Romanian nuclear policy. In this context in order to implement the *National Strategy for Nuclear Safety and Security*, approved by the Romanian Government in 2014, important progresses in accomplishing the commitments assumed by each institution involved in the field through the related Action Plan have been made.

Madam President,

Romania, based on more than 60 year experience, has demonstrated a strong commitment to nuclear safety and has significantly strengthened its regulatory

framework for nuclear and radiation safety, making important progress related to the management of radioactive waste and nuclear spent fuel, a progress certified by IAEA experts in 2017. Gaining expertise in the field of nuclear safety and security, both on theoretical and practical terms, has helped Romania become a relevant and reliable provider of training and assistance bilaterally or through the IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) Program, the key mechanism to deliver IAEA services. Romania is a consistent counterpart designated for regional TC projects focused on capacity building activities, strengthening and maintaining capacities in the safe, peaceful and secure use of nuclear technology. Considering the vast experience gained in the field of nuclear safety and security, Romania declares its readiness to share its theoretical and practical knowledge with other IAEA Member States in order to build and improve their systems and personnel.

Romania considers nuclear power as a stable component of the energy-mix taking into consideration the security of supply, reliability, economic efficiency, and greenhouse gas low emissions. We underscore the crucial role of intergovernmental cooperation, particularly through IAEA, for promoting a responsible and sustainable development of nuclear energy.

In order to prepare the 2020-2021 IAEA TC Program, Romania submitted, through the National Agency for Radioactive Waste (ANDR), to the IAEA in accordance with the IAEA TC guides and in accordance with the Country Program Framework, three national projects. In this context, I would like to thank the IAEA TC Europe Division for its entire support granted during the implementation phase of the on-going TC project and for the suitable advice during the preparation phase of the new TC projects.

Romania strongly encourages the active involvement of the national R&D organizations and industry in programs of international significance. Taking into consideration the European R&D progress in Lead Fast Reactors (LFR) and the existing relevant experience in the nuclear field, the Romanian authorities support building the Advanced Lead Fast Reactor European Demonstrator ALFRED at Institute for Nuclear Research Pitesti facility, in Mioveni, near Pitesti. Also, Romania will build the National Near Surface Repository by 2023. In this respect the cooperation with the IAEA TC is of paramount importance on providing support for fulfilling the prerequisites steps prior to the inception of the construction and licensing. The disposal facility will be constructed and operated in accordance to the international best practice and the recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Romania is making constant and gradual steps to increase its contribution in-kind related to:

- the number of experts for providing technical expertise (NESA and other INPRO related projects, research reactors, sterilization products, preserving artefacts);
- organize scientific visits and fellowships in the framework of IAEA Technical Cooperation Program in areas related to research reactors, nuclear power plant, radioactive waste management for the IAEA Member States, such as Jordan, Iran, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Serbia;
- co-finance the activities developed in the framework of national and regional projects as support for organizing technical meetings, workshops, conferences and scientific visits;
- promote the research activities in the nuclear field of "Horia Hulubei" National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering IFIN-HH and include it on the IAEA Collaborating Centers list in the following field:
 - Preservation of Cultural Heritage;
 - Quality Assurance & Quality Control in the field of application of irradiation technologies;
 - Radioactive Waste Management;
 - Decommissioning of Research Reactors.

We would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to use the IAEA Extra-budgetary Program under which the activities of the *"Enhancement of Nuclear Safety and Security in Romania – Improvement of Disaster Resilience and Preparedness for Radiological and Nuclear Events"* will be carried-out. The project will be implemented by the Romanian National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN) in cooperation with IAEA and the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (NRPA), under the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 having a budget of 3,500,000 Euro. The goal of the project is the improvement of capabilities in Romania to prevent the risk of accident or malicious acts in the radiological and nuclear field. The project addresses the following needs and challenges: alignment of the national regulatory framework and practices in the regulatory authority and in the licensees' organizations to the latest international standards and European Union legislation in the areas of nuclear safety and protection against ionizing radiation; implementation of several recommendations received from international peer review missions in the areas of nuclear safety, nuclear security, detection and response to events involving nuclear and other radioactive materials out of regulatory control, cyber security for nuclear installations and emergency preparedness and response; implementation of several activities in the national action plan associated with the National Strategy for Nuclear Safety and Security; implementation of the new responsibilities in nuclear emergency management.

Finally, Madam President,

Romania would like to thank the IAEA Secretariat of full cooperation in the framework of the Agency's continuous effort to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Thank you!