

Statement by H. E. Ramona-Nicole Mănescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania,
at the
63rd session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Vienna, 16 September 2019

[Madam President],
Mr. Acting Director General,
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor for me to address this distinguished audience. I would like to join the participants in paying my country's respect to the IAEA, the nation of Japan and to the family for passing of Director General Yukiya Amano. The international community has lost a visionary leader and an exemplary diplomat. We ought to uphold and expand his legacy.

[Madam President],

On behalf of Romania, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the sixty-third General Conference. You have the assurance of the full support and cooperation of the Romanian delegation in the fulfillment of your important duties. Let me also warmly welcome Saint Lucia as the newest member of the Agency.

Romania fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to address some issues of particular importance to my country.

[Madam President],
Distinguished delegates,

The IAEA continues to provide a fundamental contribution to international peace and security, and to global development. For over 60 years, the Agency has been instrumental in tackling nuclear proliferation challenges by ensuring effective application of safeguards, in supporting Member States to have better access to the benefits of nuclear science and technology and by strengthening nuclear safety and security.

The peaceful application and safe use of nuclear technologies is critical for states to achieve sustainable development. Under the motto "Atoms for Peace and Development", late Director General Amano strived every day to illustrate how relevant the role of the IAEA is in the life of ordinary people. This is his legacy.

As a founding member of the Agency, Romania has extensive knowledge about what this organization meant for the international community. Romania is profoundly attached to the core mission of the IAEA and against this background, we have decided time has come to put forward a candidate best suited to steer the Agency in fulfilling its mission. Therefore, Romania nominated Ambassador Cornel Feruță as candidate for the position of Director General.

Ambassador Feruță is well esteemed among the IAEA community. His deep commitment to uphold the values and the independence of this organization is well known. I am convinced that he will be able to contribute with loyalty and professionalism to the further enhancement of the Agency. And to its prestige. Therefore I would like to ask all the Member States to support Ambassador Cornel Feruță.

Distinguished delegates,

The IAEA serves the most sought for objectives: peace. Aside from goodwill, in order to serve peace we need to fully respect the rules we have committed to in the framework of the United Nations. It is the case of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The NPT is the best route to work towards the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, as stated in the Article VI, in a way that promotes international stability and undiminished security for all.

The IAEA has an essential role with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The safeguards system has to continue to perform to the best of its capacity. We therefore encourage all countries to respond in a constructive and mutual beneficial way to Agency's needs and contribute their share in order to strengthen the effectiveness and the efficiency of safeguards implementation. The Additional Protocol and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement play a critical role and they must become universal in order to strengthen IAEA's capacity to detect and respond to non-compliance.

The IAEA worked relentlessly in monitoring the JCPOA. Full and rigorous implementation of this Agreement is key, together with the full cooperation with the IAEA. The Agency's long-term mission of verification and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments is a field that constantly brings the IAEA into the sight and the mind of billions of people. The experts of the Agency involved in this or other mission are serving a value which goes hand in hand with peace: the truth. And truth is the foundation of trust. In this vein, I will add that we expect from the DPRK to abandon in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner its nuclear programs and to resume the cooperation with the IAEA. Until then, the existing sanctions should continue to be strictly enforced.

[Madam President],

The risk of nuclear terrorism is a worldwide concern. We encourage all States to become parties to the relevant international instruments and to create a strong nuclear safety and security regime. Romania fully supports the objectives of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) which brings a valuable contribution to the global nuclear security architecture.

Improving nuclear safety and security is another core objective of the IAEA. In February next year, Romania will co-chair with Panama the International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS). We hope that the Conference will highlight the positive role of nuclear security in the context of the peaceful use of nuclear technologies, the central role of the IAEA in this regard, and it will reinforce the commitment of all IAEA Member States to nuclear security.

Romania has demonstrated throughout the years 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. Against this background, we are developing the first national laboratory in the field of nuclear forensics, in close collaboration with the IAEA.

Furthermore, the Nuclear Training Center of the National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering provides courses in nuclear safety and security, having recently developed the training of representatives of authorities with responsibilities in the nuclear field.

We would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to use the IAEA's extra-budgetary programme in order to carry out the activities of a project targeting the *Improvement of Disaster Resilience and Preparedness for Radiological and Nuclear Events*". Implemented in cooperation with Norway and the IAEA, this project aims to improve my country's capacity to prevent the risk of accident or malicious acts in the radiological and nuclear field.

Our commitment to the IAEA was visible during our first term as EU PRES, right here, in Vienna, through the workshop on "*Nuclear Security*": *From Political Commitment to Practical Implementation*". I would also like to mention our support for the IAEA's Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme, to which we continue providing voluntary financial contributions. Not least, the TC is essential for Romanian Nuclear Agency and Radioactive Waste (ANDR), which is building the National Near Surface Repository by 2023.

[Madam President],

Distinguished delegates,

The task of the IAEA to facilitate international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, to promote nuclear safety and security, and nuclear verification remains more important than ever in today's ever.

Let me conclude by extending my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Acting Director General and to the IAEA Secretariat for their hard work, professionalism and impartiality, and to assure them of all our continuous support.

Ambassador Feruță, you have Romania's support for continuing your activity at the helm of the organization!

Thank you!