

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania,
at the International Conference on Nuclear Security
„Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts”**

**Mr. Director General,
Mr. Co-President,
Distinguished participants,**

It is my pleasant duty to greet you all to the International Conference on Nuclear Security, so appropriately entitled „*Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts*”. I welcome your interest in the valuable debates taking place this week and I count on your active involvement and constructive contribution to a successful event.

I would also like to thank you, Vice-minister Alfaro Boyd, and your colleagues, for the combined efforts, professionalism and team spirit shown during the ICONS 2020 organization process, as distinguished co-president of our Conference. My appreciation also goes to the co-chairs of the Programme Committee, Ambassador Svetoslav Spassov of Bulgaria and Ambassador Omar Amer Yousseff of Egypt, for skillfully guiding the preparations for the Scientific and Technical Programme of ICONS 2020. Last but not least, I extend my personal recognition to the staff of the IAEA Secretariat for their dedication and intensive work in translating the vision of the Member States for the ICONS 2020 proceedings into practice.

The Ministerial Declaration we are adopting today is the result of a thorough and scrupulous process that started with the meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors in March 2019, when Romania and Panama were nominated co-presidents of this Ministerial Conference. For almost one year, IAEA Member States have shared their views on the future of nuclear security. The co-presidents have served as facilitators and honest brokers, with careful consideration for the valuable inputs and priorities put forward by Member States.

We have before us a concise and forward-looking document, which reflects our full-bodied political will and adds value to the process of strengthening nuclear security worldwide. It also builds on the previous Ministerial Declarations and takes into account the latest nuclear security resolution of the General Conference. Thus, I am confident that the ICONS 2020 Ministerial Declaration will guide and channel efforts of Member States, as well as the work of the IAEA, for ensuring nuclear security in the coming years.

Romania welcomed the opportunity of co-chairing ICONS 2020 and the preparatory process, including the negotiation of the Ministerial Declaration, due to our expertise of over 60 years in the nuclear sector. In our view, such a tradition obliges us to support global efforts to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, ensuring the safety of our citizens and the protection of the environment.

Before saying a few words in national capacity, allow me to underline that Romania is fully aligned with the EU intervention.

**Mr. Director General,
Mr. Co-President,
Distinguished participants,**

The IAEA has proven its worth and relevance, over and over again, in highly sensitive field. I would also like to extend Romania's wishes of success to Ambassador Grossi, as the Agency's Director General. My country stands ready to provide full support towards the fulfillment of your important duties.

The contribution of the IAEA to global peace, security and development is pivotal. For over 60 years, the Agency has been instrumental in tackling nuclear security challenges by supporting Member States strengthen nuclear safety and security, as well as access the real benefits of nuclear science and technology. As a founding member of the Agency, Romania is profoundly attached to the core mission of the IAEA.

There are more than 60 years since the start of the Romanian national nuclear program dedicated exclusively to peaceful purposes, yielding significant economic benefits and strengthening our energy security. Based on this positive experience, Romania has also engaged with countries developing national nuclear programs for peaceful purposes, sharing expertise and promoting adherence to the IAEA's founding principles.

Romania is party to all international instruments adopted under the auspices of the IAEA in the area of nuclear safety and security. Romania's expertise has not gone unnoticed. Quite recently, ambassador Cornel Feruță has ended his mandate as the Agency's Acting Director General, a position he earned thanks to his own personal merits, but also to his country's relevance within the organization.

At the same time, the selection of Romania, along with Panama, to co-chair this conference is both a recognition of our efforts and an incentive to live up to the high standards expected from us.

On this note, it is my pleasure to inform you of another recognition of Romania's contribution to the overall success of the organization: the recent designation of the Nuclear Research Institute in Pitești (RATEN ICN) as an International Center based on Research Reactor (ICERR) in two areas of activity: "Education and Training" and "Joint Research and Development Projects". This is a reason for celebration for Romania, but also an asset for the Agency – therefore, a benefit for us all.

Another Romanian research institute, the "Horia Hulubei" National Institute for Research and Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering (IFIN-HH), provides courses in nuclear safety and security for government representatives with responsibilities in the nuclear field. The Institute is a regional leader in the decommissioning of research reactors, providing both expertise and technical equipment for such projects, and is developing the first national nuclear forensics laboratory, in close collaboration with the IAEA.

Distinguished participants,

Romania is fully committed to maintaining high standards of nuclear security, in line with the international conventions, treaties and agreements, and is closely following current developments in this area.

Romania, through the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN), is a valuable partner for the specialized services of the IAEA. CNCAN contributes with technical expertise in the framework of various events, ensuring the participation of lecturers in specific peer-review missions and hosting relevant meetings in cooperation with the IAEA. One such meeting was the Regional Workshop to Coordinate the Implementation of Integrated Nuclear Security Plans (INSSP) in Europe, organized in July 2019.

In this context, I would also like to mention Romania's support for the Agency's Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme, including voluntary financial contributions. Technical Cooperation is essential, for instance, for radioactive waste management efforts. In particular, such cooperation is key for the Romanian Nuclear Agency and Radioactive Waste (ANDR), which is building the National Near Surface Repository.

Our commitment to the principles and scope of the IAEA was visible during our first Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU PRES). Within this framework, in 2019, we organized here, in Vienna, the workshop "*Nuclear Security: From Political Commitment to Practical Implementation*", in an effort to highlight the importance of political backing in achieving joint nuclear security goals.

To Romania, the consolidation of EU-level and regional cooperation, to improve prevention, detection and response capabilities, are underlying engagement priorities in the context of emerging nuclear threats.

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

Thank you for your attention. I now pass the floor to my Co-President.