Statement by
H.E. Mr. Cristian Istrate, Permanent Representative of Romania
to International Organizations in Vienna
at the 2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference
General Debate
(Viena, 2 May 2017)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me first to extend to you my most sincere congratulations for your appointment at the helm of the first Preparatory Committee of 2020 NPT Review Conference, and to assure you of the Romanian delegation’s full support. Your outstanding diplomatic skills, thorough preparedness of this session and teamwork with the next Chair – Poland and the Secretariat are excellent prerequisites of a successful PrepCom.

Romania associates with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will, therefore, limit myself to a few brief points in national capacity.

Since its entry into force, the NPT has been the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. All States Parties benefit from the nonproliferation measures undertaken in accordance with the Treaty, as well as the drive towards nuclear disarmament. Their development is sustained by progress in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are all bound by a genuine interest in strengthening the Treaty’s three pillars. Much has been
done to implement and reinforce the NPT, but there is still a lot to be accomplished and we must relentlessly commit ourselves to this task.

At the beginning of a new review cycle, we should seize the opportunity to ensure the solid confidence in the effectiveness of the NPT. The Treaty is far too important to be held hostage to impractical approaches that will drive us apart from consensus and endanger its very raison d'etre. The only realistic way forward is to encourage a positive dynamic and apply the right strategies to further enhance the review process.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Our common goal of total nuclear disarmament must be addressed collectively, in an appropriate step-by-step manner, in accordance with the security challenges and treaty commitments of all NPT Parties and only when the international security environment warrants it. Any effort regarding nuclear disarmament must be considered in the framework of the NPT, avoiding unrealistic expectations that put at risk the non-proliferation regime, undermine the credibility of the Treaty and, ultimately, our shared goal of a nuclear weapons-free world.

Meanwhile, lets us look forward and focus, in a constructive and realistic manner, on achieving common ground to advance towards a world without nuclear weapons, through progress in FMCT negotiations, nuclear disarmament verification and the urgent entry into force of the CTBT.

It has been a great honor for Romania to preside over the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT in 2016, the year of its 20th anniversary. Last June, ministers and other high officials of the Signatory States met here in Vienna to express support for the entry into force of the Treaty 20 years since it was opened for signature. Once in force, the Treaty would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security. We have to finish what we started, against the backdrop
of more DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic tests in the recent past, and worrying signals about the future.

Mr. Chairman,

NPT Parties share a responsibility to reinforce the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, in particular to overcome the challenges posed by a few countries that have violated their respective international obligations. Our common security would be profoundly affected if additional countries crossed the nuclear threshold.

We welcome the progress that has been made in the implementation of the JCPOA provisions, and commend all parties involved for their good-will and hard work. The role of the IAEA remains essential, and, in this respect, Romania has made a voluntary financial contribution to the IAEA’s extra-budgetary fund for verification activities required to monitor the implementation of the JCPOA.

The Middle East deserves a comprehensive solution, including the elimination of all categories of weapons of mass destruction and a peace settlement in the region. We must draw the lessons from the last review cycle: continued, constructive and united effort, involving all the countries in the region, is needed to achieve this objective.

Developments over the past years have underscored the critical role of the implementation of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and Additional Protocol, which represent the verification standard that strengthens the IAEA’s capabilities to detect and respond to suspicions of non-compliance. For this reason, Romania supports the universal adoption and implementation of the Additional Protocol.

It is our strong belief that in the field of nuclear security there is no room for complacency. Against the backdrop of growing security threats at global, regional and national levels, the challenges posed by nuclear terrorism require ever-more concerted actions. It is therefore imperative that all aspects of nuclear security, including cyber security and
nuclear forensics, should receive equal attention and appropriate funding by all Member States.

On its side, Romania fully participates in the international efforts aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism, and welcomes the role played by the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in this respect. Romania, in cooperation with GICNT and INTERPOL, organized the regional Exercise OLYMPUS, in October 2016, to address challenges related to a nuclear security incident, and to identify strategies and best practices for overcoming these challenges. As follow-up to Exercise Olympus, Romania is planning to organize, in close collaboration with the GICNT, a practical exercise focused on nuclear forensics.

We believe, indeed, that nuclear forensics require more political attention, as well as strengthening the national capabilities. In view of that, two more agreements – a Practical Agreement with IAEA, and an Amendment to the existing Collaboration Agreement with the European Union Joint Research Center/JRC dedicated to strengthening scientific collaboration between JRC Karlsruhe and IFIN-HH – will be signed in the near future.

Let me take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the side-event on *Nuclear Detectives to the Rescue: The Role of Nuclear Forensics in the Fight against Nuclear Terrorism*, hosted by Romania and partners on 4 May 2017, at 09.00, in MO100, in order to promote a better understanding of nuclear forensic science.

*Mr. Chairman,*

Romania has established itself as a responsible actor, which uses nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. We have a tradition of proactive commitments in international cooperation projects, becoming one of the main regional providers of training on peaceful uses of nuclear energy and always ready to share our experience of over 60 years of activity in the nuclear field.
In this respect, Romania and the IAEA signed, in 2015, a “Practical Arrangements” on the scientific and technical cooperation in the field of nuclear safety. Following this, the Institute for Nuclear Research of Pitești/Romania and the Agency are organizing training for the benefit of IAEA member states in such fields as nuclear research reactors; nuclear safety; or technical and practical preparations for emergency situations.

Mr. Chairman,

Romania has had the privilege and honour to serve, during the last review cycle, as Chair of the Second Preparatory Committee in Geneva, in 2013, and the Main Committee II during the 2015 NPT Review Conference. This has been an opportunity to serve the common goal of upholding the non-proliferation regime, while accumulating an experience that could be of certain use in order to enhance the efficiency of the present review cycle.

Institutional, transparent, balanced and – I underline – inclusive approach paid off then, as it should now! We need more continuity between PrepComs and the RevCon, considering the possibility of your report, Mr. Chairman, to form the negotiating base at the beginning of the second PrepCom: the “rolling text” factor. The Bureau has to be constituted and start working earlier than last time in order to properly steer the process. Transfer of experience and lessons learned from the previous review cycle would be welcome, and I for one stand ready to contribute.

On the eve of a new review cycle, let me say this: our debates do not take place in a vacuum; this room is not isolated from the outside world. The NPT is part of a broader security landscape. While the review process will be, once more, influenced by developments elsewhere, we should resist temptations to politicize it. Instead, we have to assume the responsibilities that come alongside benefits brought to us by the Treaty and advance wherever we can in strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. Time will tell that we were right!
In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you once again of Romania’s support in your endeavors to achieve a successful outcome of the first session of the Preparatory Committee.

_Thank you, Mr. Chairman._