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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF HUNGARY DURING THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 2nd REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE OPEN SKIES TREATY

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished Colleagues,

The practice of mutual aerial observation in the framework of the Open Skies Treaty has come a long way since the first Open Skies trial flight was carried out over Hungary more than 20 years ago, on 6 January 1990 by Canada. The Canadian aircraft was airborne for about 3 hours and as a historical event the observers flew over Hungarian and Soviet military installations.

Since this historic first flight that was conducted two years before the Treaty was signed more than 300 trial missions were conducted that were followed up by more the 600 observation flights since entry into force. Already eight OSCE participating States have joined the 26 original signatories, while the application of one remains on the agenda of the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC). It is easy to overlook these common achievements, or take them for granted, but they clearly serve proof of the Treaty's continued viability and relevance. We believe that the Treaty is as an invaluable element of the toolbox which we have at our disposal for promoting peace, transparency and mutual trust.

However review conferences not only provide an opportunity to look back on past events, and to take stock of the work that has been done, but to focus on the future as well.

Answering the question: *"What does the future bring for the Open Skies Treaty?"* we should provide an objective assessment of the realities and immediately rephrase the question: *"What can we do for the Open Skies Treaty?"* First and foremost we should be firm in our willingness and readiness to preserve the sustainability of the Treaty. Undoubtedly we have to implement Treaty provisions in a constructive manner focusing on issues which brought us together but keeping in mind the possible expanded scope of application.

We believe that over the long term the Treaty should operate on the basis of modern technologies, which are less expensive and more reliable than the systems we use

currently. We should do our utmost to follow closely the technological developments by adopting the needed OSCE decisions for applying them as soon as possible.

Open Skies observation systems are expensive, and national governments especially nowadays are very sensitive to the budgetary impacts of programs. But the Open Skies Treaty is indeed a unique military confidence- and security building measure, which can also have a direct impact on the daily life of citizens. In addition to the capabilities associated with direct aerial observations, the Treaty provides smaller States with cost-effective means of acquiring appropriate information to assess military activities in other countries, which may also be applied in combination with other arms control agreements and CSBMs. Furthermore, aerial observations even with existing sensors can be carried out for other purposes such as environmental protection and disaster relief (hurricanes, floods), as well. The new technological achievements can also promote this idea.

We should also promote the ideas we believe in to other States in particular within the OSCE area. My country, as one of the Depositaries tries to be in the forefront of these efforts, for example by organising demonstration observation flights, and providing the countries in our region Open Skies courses with the possibility to use the Hungarian observation system. I should also mention that, well before the signature of the multilateral Treaty on Open Skies Hungary and Romania became the first states ever to negotiate and sign a bilateral Open Sky agreement. The Hungarian-Romanian bilateral agreement could serve as an example for sub regional or regional Open Skies regimes

Mr Chairperson,

We can take pride in our achievements in the Open Skies regime and, in that connection, I would like to express particular gratitude to all those who have been directly involved in conducting and supporting the observation missions. The Treaty has proved in practice the willingness and the capability of the States Parties to engage in the transparent promotion of a safe and peaceful environment.

In conclusion, I wish a successful outcome for the 2nd Review Conference of the Open Skies Treaty.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask that our statement be appended to the journal of the conference.

Thank you.