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## Launch of the AmCham Competitiveness Report 2016, March 29, 2016

### Speech of the AmCham President, Daniela Nemoianu

#### Intro – Opening of the Event

Good morning,

On behalf of AmCham, I am delighted to welcome you at the launching event of our 2016 Competitiveness Report.

I would like to thank all our distinguished guests for joining us, it is a true honor to have you here - top level representatives of the Parliament, Government, Presidency, Romanian Academy, political parties, National Bank, embassies, national agencies and strategic institutions, IFIs, WB, EU Commission Office, our partners from the *Coalitia pentru Dezvoltarea Romaniei*, unions, bilateral chambers, media, and civil society.

Everybody asks me what is so special about the AmCham Competitiveness Report? We have seen many others – even more comprehensive and specialized. Let me tell you this - this is not yet just another macroeconomics analysis. This is the impulse for positive disruption. It serves the higher purpose of **Project Romania**, within the integrated steps we started two years ago aiming at aligning energies towards positive developments. Now it is time. Today we do not talk numbers. Today we talk about our future by design.

This is the sound of the AmCham's voice which goes beyond a diagnostic tool. This is the voice of all of us, AmCham members, Romanian companies, local entrepreneurs, US and EU companies, state owned companies and individuals, hundreds of thousands of employees, business partners, families and citizens, as representatives of our extended communities that we belong. This also reflects shared views with our partners in the *Coalitia pentru Dezvoltarea Romaniei*, where we coordinate the Competitiveness Task Force, as well as the Infrastructure, EU Funds and Tourism ones.

Under the pressure of the regional and global developments, Romania's efforts to gain competitive edge must be strategically scaled up geo-politically and economically. Macroeconomic growth has a number of benefits, but things are more dramatic in real life. If we ignore for 1sec that we are in Marriott, and imagine ourselves in Anina, Valea Jiului or Targu Neamt, how different would things be?

Sustainability of such growth becomes crucial, and it makes sense only if translated into better living standards, quality public services and modern infrastructure. Disparities are shocking in

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Romania – we must all be concerned and act as diligent keepers. We have the duty to start the healing and transformation process.

I know that all of you understand what's at stake this year and the following ones. We face a world of challenges we must meet with strength and skill, and opportunities we must build on. So we have to get this right as standing still in obsolete patterns is not an option.

Deep-rooted stalemates, such as the massive corruption, lack of an integrated systemic vision, the infrastructure gap and the shrinking administrative capacity can be remedied only through the crafting of a **Multigenerational Country Project**.

This is about setting together a strategic course and competitive priorities that should uphold the national values and long term interests and enhance the country's role within its Euro Atlantic partnerships.

We bear the responsibility for doing our own part on the way to identify our common goals of democracy, prosperity and security. Transforming Romania requires a #collective effort (yes, we do not forget!) and this evolution must advance at all levels.

This is no little thing – this is about all stakeholders gearing up for an intense integration exercise as we strongly believe in Romania and its potential to be better and stronger.

Thank you all for making this happen!

I would like to invite Mr Dean Thompson, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy, to address the audience, followed by the message of the Presidency and the key notes of the Government.

### **Closing of the Event**

My special thanks to our brilliant project team, to Anca Harasim, our Executive Director, and to our Board for believing in this mission. Something is in the air - we call it **PROJECT ROMANIA**. Recent years have seen numerous fragmented actions, failed ideas and strategies, and 2016 is already brimming with conferences and opinions on national development strategies. Voices from the political and civil society are trying to articulate potential projections (the Government, in addition to its current mandate, the Romanian Academy with an extensive sectorial approach, isolated voices from the business community and the civil society).

However, the highest challenge is posed by our capacity to rally, to weed-out distortions and weld together complementary/fragmented vectors, to activate and integrate them and ultimately to validate them as a whole. The current stereotyped and obsolete paradigm will generate the same broken outcome, especially under the pressure of accruing risks. Transformation can only come from a totally different impact approach, from the creation of an open and honest Country Project process by integrating relevant vectors, without

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presetting the expected results. Such exercise cannot be initiated and led by one person, one Government, one party or one institution.

Whoever plans to confiscate or capitalize unilaterally on such essential endeavor will fail inevitably. And will also fail Romania. It is time now for us to leave the past behind. It is time to look forward to our future by design, not by default.

There is one success proven method for such process. The methodology requires a change in the current mentality focused on conflicting controls/interests. It is built on the identification of shared values, a visionary target and priority goals. When we succeed in flying the same flag and in sharing a unitary vision, we will be able to forge ahead in real terms. We have to look beyond any personal, ideological or circumstantial interests, in a common mission that requires accountability, enduring determination and strong anchors. In order to gain momentum, such a concept should exclude from the start a unilateral approach from one side or another of any barricade, should transcend the need for ownership or electoral/governmental credits and should not be built on shallow consultations. I am talking about the need for an advanced and balanced democratic exercise for the benefit of citizens and Romania.

The business environment has made unprecedented efforts to harmonize forces over the last three years. Acting as a catalyzer beyond its immediate perimeter, AmCham is confident in the successful calibration of a viable Country Project. I have personally pledged my time and energy to this purpose. Our duty is to trigger the impulse to set the process in motion – such a project belongs to everybody, without credit or partisan ambitions. The country has brilliant minds ready to become involved, while advanced methodologies and models exist for such complex mission. Once crafted, Project Romania will need to be undertaken through consensus and watched over for a successful implementation.

Why we do this? Because we can and because we care!

This is our call to stand up in good faith and live by our hearts the dream of a Great Romania!

Thank you for joining us today! Looking forward to the extraordinary things that are to happen!