My experience of working at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations was an invaluable learning process. Although diplomacy and international relations were never part of my curriculum at Penn, where I study economics and healthcare-focused global development, I had long been interested in world affairs and wanted to get an insight into the different facets of the negotiation process at the UN, as well as into my home country’s role and influence in the multilateral system.

Yet, the amount that I learned surpassed my expectations. I had the opportunity to work in the Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly, where I got to represent Romania at various conferences and within negotiation break-out sessions at a regional or global level. Some topics that I covered during my summer were the new sustainable urbanization agenda Habitat III, the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda of sustainable development, the South-South Cooperation Forum and Middle Income Countries Conference. I was also able to participate in various negotiation meetings within the Economic and Social Council, in the Commission for Social Development and in humanitarian resolutions. While all these topics were very related to my interest in global development, this experience enabled me to understand the opportunities and challenges in development from a completely different perspective than I had previously held. Moreover, through engaging in background research, writing reports and memos for the Romanian Ministry of External Affairs, I developed a deeper level understanding of my country’s position and engagement in a variety of development-related fields.

Outside of my officially assigned tasks, it turned out that my UN delegate badge gave me access to even more sources of knowledge. My experience would not have been complete without meeting delegates from all over the world at events in the Delegates’ Lounge, going to the Security Council or General Assembly to hear the most recent debates on combating youth terrorism and further curving the transmission of HIV, or getting to learn from the vast experience of diplomats from the Permanent Mission of Romania.

While I already miss my daily walks between the Romanian Permanent Mission, the UN Headquarters, and the European Union building, I am confident that my career path will intersect with the multilateral system in the future. The better understanding I have gained of the functioning
of the UN system, the political negotiation process, the different countries’ priorities in development, and Romania’s foreign and public policy will be invaluable for the rest of my educational experience as well. In the meantime, I am grateful for this incredible learning opportunity and excited to continue to cultivate my passion for global development and world affairs.