

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MILORAD ŠĆEPANOVIĆ,

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election. You can count on my country's full support in reaching what we hope would be a fruitful conclusion of this conference.

Montenegro aligned with the statement of the European Union. In addition, I would like to highlight certain points of particular importance to Montenegro.

Mr. President,

Small arms and light weapons remain a source of big concern. The uncontrolled availability of small arms and their illicit trafficking have an alarming cost for international peace and security, development and human rights worldwide. It is for this reason that the adoption of the ATT by the General Assembly in April 2013 was a landmark achievement. For the first time, set of internationally binding rules for arms export was defined in order to advance arms control and international security.

From the beginning, Montenegro has been active supporter and advocate for ATT. We were among the first to sign the Treaty. Montenegro was also proud to have deposited the instrument of ratification among the first 50 countries, thus contributing to the entry into force of the Treaty. Our ratification was yet another illustration of firm commitment my country has had towards the ATT and promoting responsible arms trade throughout the world.

Now that the Treaty entered into force, we expect that this instrument will be decisive in putting an end to uncontrolled arms trade which fuels armed conflicts, thus making the real difference in lives, livelihoods and human rights of millions of people worldwide.

Montenegro will be devoted to the full and effective implementation of the ATT as well as to upholding the principles and standards enshrined by the Treaty on a global scale. Our efforts will continue in order to make sure that the Treaty truly becomes the universal one, with broad and effective application.

In the field of small arms and light weapons, Montenegro has developed a solid legislative framework, in line with EU standards, supported by relevant strategic documents with an aim to ensure full compliance with international obligations and commitments, in particular the ATT

and the restrictive measures adopted by the UN Security Council or the EU, as well as human rights situation in the country concerned.

Mr. President,

As significant achievements as adoption and entry into force of the ATT were, this was just the first step. Next that comes in our joint endeavor, which is moving from adoption to effective implementation, is crucial task of arriving at some very important decisions to set the future of the ATT on a solid path. We have to create conditions to ensure the ATT serves the best function, keeping in mind international peace and security and human rights of millions of people around the globe in conflict areas whose daily life is heavily affected by destabilizing arms flows to illicit users.

Critical choices as related to the rules of procedure, secretariat, financing, participation and reporting have to be made, but for the exclusive purpose of ensuring the ATT is as effective as possible. We have come a long way. Now is the time to put a stamp on the ATT and deliver results with a view to make sure the effect of the ATT is widely felt and that it is not compromised for whatever narrow and marginal interests there may be.

Every effort should be made to reach decisions by consensus. This includes selection of the host country of the Secretariat and the head of the Secretariat. On this point, allow me to convey my country's view that if it happens that the host country of the Secretariat is from the South, then the Head of the Secretariat should be from the North, in order to ensure the regional balance.

If, however, the consensus is not possible, then there should be a vote, in order to avoid the blockage of actions and progress. ATT simply can't and shouldn't be held hostage to consensus rule. We have learned this lesson from experience of other disarmament fora.

Let me close by assuring you of Montenegro's constructive approach throughout this conference so that the end result of this significant gathering is as positive as possible.

Thank you.