

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MILORAD ŠĆEPANOVIĆ,

**DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS AND REGIONAL COOPERATION, MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF MONTENEGRO**

Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. You can count on my country's full support in coming to 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,

Widespread availability and illicit trafficking of conventional arms, most significantly small arms and light weapons, affect every region of the world and have an alarming human and economic cost. These easily accessible weapons form crucial part of conflicts, leading directly to more than 50,000 deaths each year as well as to large-scale displacement. What is particularly striking is that civilians, mainly women and children, suffer the most. For these reasons there is a clear need and responsibility to make tangible difference in advancing arms control, for the benefit of peace and security, economic development and human rights of millions of people worldwide. To this end, we will have to reach some important decisions at this conference that will help ensure the Treaty is as effective as possible on a global scale.

It is in this context that we have to pay particular attention to the effective implementation of the Treaty and its universalization. With less than two years since entry into force, 87 countries have become states parties to the Treaty, and 130 have signed it, which is a remarkable achievement. But it is obvious we need more states on board, especially those that are among the key stakeholders in arms trade. We believe one of the best ways to do this is through as committed and faithful implementation of the ATT as possible by those states that are already parties. By demonstrating that the Treaty makes a genuine impact in alleviating illicit trade that fuels armed conflicts, we will create an atmosphere of positive pressure on those states not parties to join our common quest.

For this to happen, states parties have to be able to fulfil their Treaty obligations. Even though primary responsibility for this lies at the national level, successful application in general also calls for effective mechanisms for international cooperation and assistance since not all states are in position to tackle all challenges on their own. Voluntary Trust Fund, with Terms of Reference

that will allow it a full functionality, is certainly indispensable in achieving this task. Sharing knowledge and experience is also essential for ensuring solid overall implementation.

Mr. President,

Montenegro is strongly 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. We remain committed to the responsible arms trade, bearing in mind maintenance of international peace and security and human rights of all those people that are affected by uncontrolled arms flows.

My country submitted national report on the implementation of the Treaty for the year 2015, and made it public. We encourage all states to show transparency and to submit their annual reports, as these two aspects go to the heart of the Treaty.

In the field of small arms and light weapons, Montenegro is undertaking legislative changes in order to bring our laws and procedures even further in line with highest international standards, thus ensuring full compliance with international obligations, primarily 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.

Montenegro served in the Bureau between the two conferences and tried to contribute as much as we could to its work. We would like to acknowledge the role of the President and to congratulate Mr. Dladla on his election as an Executive Director of the Secretariat, which serves as recognition for his contribution and commitment to the Treaty's early phase of implementation.

Mr. President,

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.