



STALNA MISIJA CRNE GORE PRI UJEDINJENIM NACIJAMA
PERMANENT MISSION OF MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Filip Vujanović
President of Montenegro

at the High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals
Round Table on Education and Health
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Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for jointly convening this important event. It is a great honour to address this extraordinary gathering on a matter that is of vital importance for all of us, to review the progress achieved so far in the implementation of MDGs in the field of education and health, and strengthen our resolve in reaching the set goals by 2015.

Montenegro, the youngest member state of the United Nations family, has been fully committed to realizing the development goals. Now, after more than two years since regaining independence, we can be proud of the results that we have achieved in economic development, including the level of economic growth and stability, and wide legislation and social reforms that represent significant tools in harmonizing national policies with the MDG targets.

The Constitution of Montenegro stipulates free and mandatory primary education, with equal access to education opportunities. Ongoing reforms of the education sector introduced a new system of education, developed to meet individual needs of all children, particularly those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups of the society. Indicators show that the reform implementation yielded positive results, making the education-related MDGs achievable. Nevertheless, some challenges remain, mainly, the fact that many skills and knowledge acquired do not reflect the increasing needs of the labour market. With this in mind, implementation of a new concept has been under way, improving the quality of education and introducing new forms and methods that offer applicable knowledge.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The achievement of all eight MDGs is closely interlinked. Given that three out of eight goals aimed at achieving equality in human development are health-related, Montenegro attaches particular importance to the improvement of its health-care system, which provides for the

universal access to its services. Although Montenegro is on track to achieve related targets, further reform of the system is necessary and it includes improvement of the primary health care, strengthening it at the local level to ensure quality access, especially with respect to vulnerable population groups, proper care for all children, particularly children with special needs, improvement of maternal health, increased effectiveness and efficiency, and introduction of secondary and tertiary health care services. Moreover, special steps have been undertaken to empower women, raise awareness of their rights, partially by improving practices for integrated maternal health and safe motherhood and the development of programmes for prevention of mother and child neglect.

Even though Montenegro is a low prevalence country, the Government regards combating of HIV/AIDS as a priority, placing it within a wider concept of social justice, equality and human rights. National HIV/AIDS Strategy, implemented with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the UNDP, is a framework for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS focused programming. UNDP Office in Montenegro and the Global Fund are currently in the process of organizing a regional conference to address, approach and tackle this issue from a regional standpoint.

Concerted efforts aimed at the creation of institutional, social and economic environment that will contribute to the overall development entail both national and international responsibility and require coordinated actions in order to achieve the set goals. Rising challenges faced today, mainly the global financial crisis, increase in energy and food prices, and climate change, underlined in the latest Secretary-General's Report on MDGs, are undermining the significant progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. However, they also urge for a greater commitment in the efforts from all sides and call for a truly global response. These developments necessitate improvement of aid quality and donor coordination, including both financial and technical assistance, full support of the UN system, and increased partnership among public sector, private sector and the civil society.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Montenegro's commitment to continue reforms that will lead to better living standards, ensure efficient and sustainable education, health and social care systems, and create conditions necessary for the achievement of MDGs by the target date.

Thank you!