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PERMANENT MISSION OF MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

H.E. Mr. Milorad Šćepanović

Agenda item 28
Advancement of Women

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during this session, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election and I assure you of Montenegro's unwavering support in your efforts to lead the work of the Committee to the successful conclusion of the issues and challenges before us.

Mr. Chairman,

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

Montenegro fully supports and welcomes the establishment of the new body "UN Women" and its leading role in strengthening women's rights and improving gender equality. Let me join others in congratulating Ms. Michelle Bachellet on her recent appointment as the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women.

Mr. Chairman,

Montenegro reaffirms its commitments towards achievement of goals set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as in the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and takes all necessary steps in order to fully reach gender equality. Over the past decade, there has been considerable progress towards gender equality in Montenegro, as well as integrating gender component into key Government's

policies and processes. Montenegro has established an institutional and legal framework for the improvement of gender equality.

Improvements have been made in development and adoption of legislation, primarily the Constitutions of Montenegro that was adopted in 2007, and the Law on Gender Equality adopted the same year. In addition, we are continuously working on engendering national and local strategies, action plans and other policies, in accordance with the international standards in this field. This Law is the first piece of anti-discrimination legislation in Montenegro and one of the most significant mechanisms for the elimination of discrimination by gender and the establishment of gender equality. The Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality for the period 2008-2012, represents a framework document for development and implementation of gender equality policy at the national level in eight areas of concern, which are in line with the Beijing Platform for Action. According to the Criminal Code of Montenegro, violence in the family and family community is sanctioned as a criminal offence. In addition, a separate law dealing with this issue has been prepared – the Family Violence Protection Law – which is currently in its parliamentary procedure stage and is expected to be adopted soon. The novelty of this law is reflected in the urgency of intervention and enhanced protection measures.

Mr. Chairman,

Having in mind standards and obligations enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Montenegro has submitted its first report on the implementation of the Convention as an independent state this year. Montenegro also submitted Millennium Development Goals Mid-Term Report in the run-up to the Summit which reflects our commitment to take responsibility for conducting the national development policy. We can say that we are on the way to achieve all MDGs even before 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

Mechanism for gender equality of the Government of Montenegro has been working since its founding, in 2003, on the advancement of women in Montenegro in different areas such as: education, health, violence against women, economy, media, culture, politics etc., and has achieved success in many aspects. Gender equality, as a human rights issue, is increasingly recognised by the society as a whole. Beside the Government's mechanism for gender equality, in particular Gender Equality Department of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, great contribution is given by the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality, which has recently strengthened its activities. In addition to that we are constantly working on empowerment of local institutions to integrate gender in their work.

Having in mind that women remain under-represented in decision-making and in the Parliament, in the time to come Government of Montenegro will focus more intensive efforts to increase involvement of women at all levels of decision-making. In that regard, activities will focus on implementation of the segment Politics and Decision Making from the Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality. Given the fact that the process of amending the electoral legislation is under way, Montenegro continues to make efforts in order to introduce a 30% quota for women on electoral lists and during the allocation of seats. The increase in women's participation in decision-making positions will lead to the change of the perception of the role and position of women in society and will bring about changes in all these areas where the unequal position of women in Montenegro is visible.

Mr. Chairman,

Domestic violence and violence against women is the issue of high importance and thus we will put greater efforts on its combating. Continued efforts need to be made in the field of labour and employment, since the economic independence of women is of key importance for the achievement of all other rights.

However, there is still much work to be done and we have many challenges ahead as well. Montenegro reaffirms its commitment and readiness to further improve women's rights and to strengthen gender equality.

Thank you very much.