STATEMENT
by H.E. Mr. Milorad Šćepanović
Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations
at the General Debate on All Disarmament and International Security Agenda
Items of the First Committee
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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the office of Chairperson of the First Committee, and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of Montenegrin delegation. I am confident that under your able leadership this year’s session will come to a successful conclusion.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the EU statement. In addition to this, please allow me to stress certain points which are of particular interest to my country.

Mr. Chairman,

2010 was a good year for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We have seen substantial progress on a number of fronts, including the New START Agreement, the US Nuclear Posture Review, the NPT Review Conference, entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the beginning of negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty. In particular, the action plan adopted by this year’s Review Conference on the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty lays out a path for work towards the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world. Montenegro warmly welcomes these developments. But we certainly need to maintain and strengthen this momentum in order to come closer to the achievement of our ultimate common goals. To this end, I assure you that Montenegro is fully committed to the cooperation and comprehensive implementation of the agreed outcomes and all other relevant mechanisms.
Despite this, some serious challenges remain. One of the great concerns has been the ongoing stalemate of the Conference on Disarmament, which has not been able to engage in the substantive negotiations for almost a decade and a half. It is critical that CD member states begin negotiations immediately on a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT) based on the 1995 Shannon Mandate, on negative security assurances, on nuclear disarmament, on the issue of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). Therefore, we cannot afford more delays and must stay engaged and find sustainable solution to overcome deadlock. In this regard, Montenegro commends initiative of Mr. Secretary General to convene high-level meeting on this matter and fully supports the recommendations and follow-up steps with an aim to move forward the multilateral disarmament agenda. We are confident that only multilateral approach to security issues can contribute to the establishment of long-term peace and stability.

Mr. Chairman,

Even though Montenegro is the youngest member of the UN, we have taken all necessary steps to achieve membership in the organizations and treaties which have as an objective enhancement of international peace and security. As the latest such development, I am proud to point out that Montenegro was among the first 30 countries to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, therefore making it possible for it to enter into force and become a legally-binding international instrument. Furthermore, I would like to underline that last week, by destroying the remaining 353 cluster bombs, my country concluded the process of destruction of cluster munitions stockpiles, well ahead of the Convention’s specified time line. This is just one more proof of Montenegro’s firm dedication to play an active role and constructively contribute to the overall efforts in global disarmament and non-proliferation.

As for Montenegro’s contribution to the regional and subregional peace and stability, allow me to mention that Montenegro is currently chairing the 1996 Subregional Arms Control Agreement or so-called Article IV. This Agreement, regarded by many as a success story, has ensured that appropriate defense force levels in the region are maintained, while at same time becoming an essential element in achieving a high level of stability, cooperation, transparency and confidence among four signatory countries. More than 9,000 items of heavy weaponry have been reduced so far. In order to ensure comprehensive and thorough implementation, Montenegro, inter alia, continuously accepts and conducts more inspections than suggested by the country-specific ratio as a sign of its commitment to the regional security and cooperation, in accordance with
its foreign policy strategic priorities. Hence, Montenegro is determined to continue to play a stability role in our region.

It is important to say that further progress in the implementation of the Agreement significantly helps countries on their path to European and Euroatlantic integrations, the common perspective of the Region. As I mentioned earlier, the model approach of Article IV proved to be critically important factor to strengthening the regional and international peace and security. We stand ready to share our experiences on the implementation of this mechanism with a view of its possible usage and application in other similar cases and circumstances.

Montenegrin delegation looks forward to engaging in future issues of the First Committee and is open to a constructive cooperation in all fields. So I would like to assure you, distinguished Mr. Chairman, of our support for your efforts towards an effective organization of our forthcoming work and achievement of tangible results.

Thank you.