STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Milorad Šćepanović, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations,
at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
9 July 2012

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Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as President of this conference. Montenegro commends and highly regards your able leadership and guidance throughout the preparatory process, which will again be necessary to have fruitful negotiations.

Montenegro fully aligns with the statement of the European Union. In addition, I would like to add few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

Much has already been said and we are all well aware about the severe negative and destructive effects that poorly regulated arms trade brings to many parts of the globe. We have heard all kinds of disturbing evidence and statistics about this grave problem, which has become one of the most pressing in the world today, that remind us of the significance of the task we have at hand. After extensive deliberative and preparatory work that helped create a solid foundation, time has come to conclude a strong, robust and effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that will establish the highest possible common standards for the international trade in conventional arms. ATT that will regulate legal trade and prevent future irresponsible and illegal trade in arms and its diversion to illicit markets. ATT that will make a real difference to maintenance of international peace and security as well as to the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Mr. President,

In order to have real impact, we need a Treaty that will be broad and comprehensive in scope. It has to include not only the seven categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, but also small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, technology and parts and components. Similarly, the ATT has to impose controls on transfers (exports, imports, transit and transhipment) and brokering of conventional arms covered by the scope of the Treaty. It has to have strong and robust criteria with clearly defined and implementable provisions for national control systems. In order to ensure transparency and accountability which should be at the core of the Treaty, ATT has to contain a reporting mechanism, one that will make submission of national reports mandatory, but that will take into account capacity constraints of small countries. In this context, Montenegro believes that the paper you, Mr. President, circulated on 3rd of July, is a very good basis for our negotiations.

It is essential that we arrive at an ATT that enjoys the broadest possible support of international community and that can be signed by as many states as possible. We need comprehensive agreement that will, as far as possible, reflect the interest of the entire international community. Therefore, it is important that in the coming negotiations we all engage in a transparent and open manner and in the spirit of compromise and flexibility in order to achieve a substantive outcome to this conference. At the same time, while recognizing that every country has a stake in the final outcome, we have to, at all times, keep in mind our common end goal we have gathered here for and we have set for ourselves with General Assembly resolution from 2009. We have to honour our moral commitment and to the best use this historical opportunity to conclude an effective agreement that will to the furthest extent prevent future losses of innocent lives and help bring stability and prosperity to the millions of people around the globe who on daily basis suffer from armed violence and repression.

Mr. President,

Montenegro attaches great importance and strongly supports the negotiations. As a country firmly dedicated to responsible arms trade, Montenegro would like to reassure you of its readiness to engage and contribute constructively to achieving a strong, universal, robust and legally-binding ATT.

Thank you.