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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT
by Mr. Gojko Čelebić
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Montenegro

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you, Ambassador Badji, and other members of the Bureau on your election to preside the work of this session of the First Committee. At the same time, I would like to commend Ambassador Mona Juul for her commitment and contribution during the previous session of the Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Under-Secretary General, Mr. Sergio Duarte for his appointment as the Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and wish him every success in his new post.

Montenegro has already aligned itself with the Statement made by the delegation of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. In my statement, I would like to elaborate briefly on some First Committee topics from our national perspective.

As the youngest UN state, we have adapted our legislation to the international disarmament legislation framework through adoption of the main international treaties, thus creating necessary preconditions for our work in the area of defence and security. Almost one year ago, we established the Ministry of Defence. Since then we have worked hard to bring professionals, experienced and young ones, to this institution in order to prepare ourselves for the requirements of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly believe that only by creating professional and successful institutions we can contribute to the regional stability in the Balkans and be a valuable member of the International Community in our common efforts to preserve peace and security.

My Government has indicated that demilitarisation of small and light weapons (SALW), combined with the establishment of safe storage to, as close to NATO operational standards as possible, is a priority during the defence reforms process. Montenegro has also made commitments to compiling all appropriate UN and OSCE agreements and mechanisms relating to SALW.

In the framework of the MONDEM Programme (Montenegro Demilitarisation Program), which is implemented in joint cooperation with the UNDP and OSCE, the project of destroying heavy arms has been initiated. By now, we have destroyed sixty-one T – 55 tanks. The money acquired by selling the destroyed tanks is further on invested into other MONDEM projects as a Montenegrin contribution to this useful programme.

In that regard, UNDP continues to be the prime implementing partner for MONDEM, responsible for the recruitment and contracting of national and international specialists, advisors and consultants, as well as for procurement and other logistics and operational requirements. The OSCE will provide technical and specialist advice as agreed in the supporting project documents.

By the end of this year, we have planned to bring to an end the activities on destroying dangerous chemical substances. In this way, Montenegro shall be freed of dangerous rocket fuel, as well as oxidant and napalm aluminum blends. In 2008, the National Agency for the Prevention of Illegal Production, Storing and Trafficking of Bio-chemical Weapons shall continue with its activities, thus contributing to the overall security situation in the region. Moreover, our plans for 2008 envisage dealing with surplus ammunition of all calibers as well as surplus explosive device.

According to the Annual Plan of the Centre for Conflict Prevention, three inspections of specific areas and one evaluation visit (Vienna Document 99) have been conducted in our country. Montenegro also undertook similar inspections in our neighbouring countries. This has been done in close cooperation with our partners from the region and in line with the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control, which has proved to be an extremely successful mechanism for the promotion of arms control in the Western Balkans. In this context, in July this year we also signed the bilateral Agreement on the principles and procedures for the implementation of the Subregional Arms Control Agreement with Serbia.

Montenegro supports the initiative on the International *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) which could become a comprehensive instrument for establishment of common standards in this field thus preventing conventional arms proliferation. Montenegro has submitted a report to the Secretary-General on its assessment of the feasibility, scope and parameters of a future ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the Montenegrin Delegation to assure you of our support and willingness to cooperate in order to achieve practical results in the work of the Committee.

I thank you