

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Ambassador Nebojša Kaluđerović, State Secretary for Political Affairs of Montenegro

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development Review Conference

Excellencies and Esteemed colleagues,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour, on behalf of Montenegro as a member of Geneva Declaration, to greet you all and express my content with the increasing number of states who support the Declaration and its common goals.

Allow me to express support to the efforts of all states that are striving to implement the objectives of the Geneva Declaration, the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspect, as well as all other relevant documents limiting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which are the main cause of arms violence.

The consequences of armed violence do not recognise the state borders. Regardless of whether the weapons is used in arms conflicts or it is used as a result of insufficient control of arms transfers, it causes great and irreparable consequences, not only for the country in which it's taking place, but for the entire international community.

Lost human lives can not be recovered, nor is it possible to plan long-term economic development in an environment of uncertainty and instability. Easy availability and the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons contributes to prolonging conflicts, and is detrimental to efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of conflicts. All these elements represent the major obstacle to development, and cause social inequality, chronic unemployment, uneven access to resources, unregulated urbanization, and various forms of marginalization.

In the recent past, Montenegro has experienced the consequences of armed conflicts that left a big mark on the whole region. Although it hasn't been involved in those conflicts, Montenegro is still facing the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as different obstacles to overall development.

Concern for the safety of citizens is a central responsibility of all States, where combat violence is a basic precondition for the overall development and creating an environment conducive to promoting economic growth and improving living

conditions. To that end, Montenegro is committed to strengthening democracy on the basis of respect for international law, rule of law, protecting and promoting human rights and freedoms, economic and social development of countries and the overall technological progress and development of society.

Montenegro is a member of all important international instruments in the field of control of trafficking and possession of small arms and light weapons, and advocates for the elimination of its illegal trade. To this end, Montenegro has established effective system of control of foreign trade in arms, based on the strict implementation of international obligations and respect of the common criteria contained in the former Code of Conduct of EU. Furthermore, Montenegro has adopted a number of national documents, in order to create the unified national system of control and reduction of small arms and light weapons in possession of citizens, the police, the armed forces and other bodies, in order to provide conditions for sustainable development.

As one of priorities in the defence reform process, Montenegro is implementing many projects in cooperation with UNDP, OSCE and other international organizations for the purpose of demilitarization and safe storage capacities for the SALW. To that end, Government of Montenegro is enhancing infrastructure development of ammunition storage areas and capacity development of ammunition management systems. We are aiming to the safer world for all, through destruction of surplus of weapons, demilitarisation of conventional ammunition and recycling of heavy weapons.

Aware of the problem, we are confident that the international community led by the UN, and active participation of all its members, will continue the work on solving these increasingly complex problems. To that end, we call all states to promote cooperation at the regional and global level, as it is a key factor in promoting and implementing the basic principles contained in Declaration, which will further contribute to improving quality of life, and enhance development, peace, security and respect of human rights.

Thank you.